



MASTER GARDENERS' FAVORITES – Part 1

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Bulbs and Corms

My favorites are **Daffodils**. I like the bright colors in spring, the more the better. After a long, foggy, dreary valley winter the bright yellow daffodils let us know that spring is here and warmer days are ahead!

So many bulbs, so little time! I love **Caladiums**, especially the Florida series with their greater heat tolerance and exciting foliage colors. A few more favorites, because of their fragrant flowers and easy care: **Lily-of-the-Valley**, **Oriental Lilies**, **Hyacinths**, **Daffodils**, **Crinum Lilies**, **Belladonna**, **Crocus**, and **Freesias**.

Two of my favorite bulbs are **Snowflakes** and *Spanish Bluebells*. The *Snowflakes* (*Leucojum aestivum*) have been in the ground in my garden for years. They are very hardy bulbs that grow in clumps but don't spread. They grow to a height of about 18 inches and have dainty white bell-shaped flowers with little green dots on the tips. (It looks as though the garden fairies painted them on!) The first *Snowflake* was in bloom in my garden on Jan. 15th and continued to bloom through March.

The **Spanish Bluebell'** (*Scilla hispanica* or *Hyacinthoides hispanica*) are another group of dependable bulbs that have been in the ground for years. I did finally divide them a year ago. They have pretty blue bell-shaped flowers and grow to about 15 inches tall. They do multiply but are not invasive, at least in my garden. They were in bloom around mid-April this year

This year I have ordered some bulbs of **Scilla peruviana**, and I'm looking forward to seeing the blooms of this "new to me" bulb. They are described in the catalog as growing on "beautiful spheres made up of tiny individual dark violet stars." They bloom late spring and early summer and do well in zones 8, 9, and 10. They grow to a height of 12 inches. Perhaps it will make my "favorites" list next year!

I love **Watsonia** and **Gladiolas**. They are both tall and graceful in my garden as the Roses are beginning to leaf out in the spring. Plus beautiful, vibrant colors! I also plant **Daffodils**. I really like bulbs because they come back every year in unexpected places.

I love all bulb flowers. At one time I had three 10'X30' cutting gardens full of bulbs. However, even after all of our numerous efforts at thwarting the wild cottontails on our property, they have managed to leave only the **Daffodils**; poisonous so they don't eat them, or if they do, only once. I have many varieties of **Daffodils, Tulips, Iris, Gladiola, Freesias, Naked Ladies, Lilies**, and love them all. I think I like bulbs because they have individual flowers and are such interesting shapes and colors. I guess if I had to pick a favorite it would be **Stargazer Lilies**. They are beautiful and have a strong scent.

My favorite bulbs are **Daffodils, Crocus, and Hyacinthus**. The *Daffodils* and *Crocus* to me starts the beginning of spring. I like scent of the *Hyacinthus*. It has been quite a few years but Daffodil Hill is one of my favorite gardens to visit.

Pink Rain Lily - Zephyranthes grandiflora

I received these little pink "flowers" many years ago from my mother-in-law. They were short, narrow, spindly leaves in a medium-size old enameled kitchen pot. There were no instructions given as to water, etc. She must have assumed I possessed some gardening smarts. I didn't! Anyway they bloomed and I loved them. It took a long time to learn the name. The list went from Texas surprise to summer crocus . . . on and on. By the time I became involved with master gardeners, I learned how to research. And I did discover the scientific name as well as the common name. They come in yellow and also white. Both are cute little lilies, but pink is my favorite.

Crocsmia 'Lucifer'

Blooms mid summer, brilliant red flower, strong strappy leaves.

Has an interesting seed pod after bloom, comes back reliably, multiplies prolifically, transplants well, does well at the coast, does well with little care.

Wow! I love bulbs and have so many "favorites". Some are: ***Leucojum aestivum***, commonly known as **Summer Snowflake**, though it blooms in late winter / early spring. About 18" tall, it has strappy leaves, bell-shaped white flowers and comes back reliably every year. ***Sparaxis tricolor***, or **Harlequin Flower**, is native to S. Africa and grows from a corm. Just 12" tall, it has stiff lance-shaped leaves and star-shaped blossoms in spring in colors of red, pink, orange or purple, with a yellow throat outlined in black. Naturalizes easily. ***Sprekelia formosissima***, a Mexican native, is also known as **Aztec Lily, Jacobean Lily or St. James Lily**. This huge bulb forms strappy mostly evergreen foliage and 6-inch red flowers that look like large orchids. Blooms sporadically throughout the year from late spring through fall.

When we bought this property we had many pleasant surprises the first year. My favorite is ***Sprekelia formosissima* (Aztec lily)** which blooms in early summer. It has a beautiful orchid-like red bloom. Every time I divide the bulbs and re-plant, they seem to like to reproduce and get crowded before they bloom again. It does not seem to be a very common bulb and is very easy to grow.

My favorite bulbs are ***Babiana* (Baboon Flower), Anemones (Windflower), Sparaxis tricolor (Harlequin Flower) and Ixia (African Corn Lily)**. They all bloom repeatedly on one bulb or corm and have vibrant colors. The *Anemone's* support greenery is unobtrusive so its easier to ignore them in the garden as they replenish the bulb. The *Ixia* grow on a slender stem two feet long that sways in the breeze. All 4 bloom year after year and the *Sparaxis* and *Babiana* naturalize well.

Plants for Butterflies & Birds

I would have to say that Lantana, in any color, seems to be the biggest draw in our garden for butterflies

One of the few birds I don't have to fight off for my share of the fruit we try to grow, is the tiny hummingbird. They are fascinating to watch as they flit from flower to flower, pausing to rest on a tree branch before continuing the never-ending search for nectar. Attracted to the color red, I had one come within several inches of a red dress I was wearing, hovering just inches away, trying to figure out if I were an interloper or the real deal.

A few of the plants they like are Pineapple Guava (*Feijoa sellowiana*), Bottlebrush (*Callistemon*), Geranium (*Pelargonium*), and Lantana.

Butterflies are relaxing to watch as they travel from flower to flower. A few of the plants they seem to like: Sweet Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*), Verbena, Agapanthus, and of course, the Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja*).-----

I live on the Kings River among some huge old Oaks and Sycamores that provide shelter, nesting, acorns, seeds, and insects for many birds and insects. I have robins, finches, flycatchers, wood ducks, mallards, woodpeckers, sparrows, mourning doves, owls, and wood ducks, that are attracted to the Wild Blackberries, Strawberries, Pyracantha, Nandina, and Juniper Berries all year for their flowers first, then their fruit and berries. I have a freebie Nectarine tree, a big Loquat tree both loaded with fruit in late spring- early summer, and three Pine trees that provide fruit and nuts.

Bees and butterflies hover over the Lantana, Geranium, Sweet William, Society Garlic, Bergenia & Candytuft (in late winter), Impatiens, Fibrous Begonias (in summer) that attract butterflies, as well as Butterfly Bush, Lemon Blossoms, Mexican Primrose, Jasmine in spring. All these plants provide nectar, insects, and shelter for butterflies and hummingbirds.

I keep a compost pile where I see lots of activity from ground feeding birds like robins going after worms, grubs and beetles.

I also encourage brambles, wild berry vines, grasses, fallen branches and leaves to collect along the river bank under the sycamore, willow and cottonwood trees

All this is a tad messy, but we're so blessed to share our piece of land with the wildlife that calls it home along with us! Butterflies and Hummingbirds are attracted to our Penstemon and Salvia throughout the summer. They are also very fond of Verbena bonariensis. I just love this plant since it blooms spring through summer. It is tall and stately among roses. It does self-seed but it is welcome in open soil. Several Monarch Butterflies have been visiting our Roses. Gaura lindheimeri is also a favorite of birds and butterflies with its graceful airy, upright growth

More than a year ago I planted a Bloomerang Purple Lilac (Syringa x 'Penda') in full sun in Fresno and it couldn't be happier. It was from the Monrovia Proven Winners collection, up to 4-5 ft tall and wide, and is drought tolerant. It has the classic lilac fragrance for months instead of weeks, blooms in spring and then again throughout summer. It claims to go through a rest period in the heat of the summer, but mine is in full bloom as I write this in triple digit temperatures. It's compact, mounded variety fits easily into any landscape, and is continually being visited by both bees and butterflies. I'm seeing now that it's for USDA Cold Hardiness Zone 3-7, so maybe I should have protected it last winter, but I didn't.

Butterflies are attracted to my Butterfly Bush and Gaura the most consistently. The Vitex tree attracts butterflies and bees. Hummingbirds like Penstemon, California Fuschia, and Pineapple Sage. When I looked up the California Fuschia in my Sunset book I saw that is also called the Hummingbird Flower.

Cacti

What I really like is the plant called, *Euphorbia milii*, especially the hybrid types from Thailand. They are thorny plant like cactus, and they don't like water that much. There are about 400 different varieties...I wish I can have them all. Now we have about 100 different colors in our back yard. I built 2 greenhouses to keep them inside during the winter. We have about 1000 plants all sizes.

I have a few favorites, among them is the genus *Astrophytum*. There are only 4 species and I have all of them. *A. asterias* and *myriostigma* have no spines! *A. capricorne* has long curling spines and only *ornatum* has yellow straight spines. They all bloom large yellow flowers in the summer. The other favorite cactus looks more like an agave and the spines are soft, it blooms several times a year during the summer. It's name is *Leuchtenbergia principis*; just the one species.

I have friends and family that live in San Diego. In their gardens I have seen the *Golden Barrel Cactus*. *Echinocactus grusonii*, also known as *Mother-In-Law's Cushion*. It's round compact shape with yellow spikes just draws your eye. It seems so contrary when you see it next to a flowering plant. When they grow in groups/masses they remind of little soldiers storming the field.

One of my favorites is the *Parodia magnifica*, which has an interesting outgrowth of pups and bright yellow flowers through the summer and fall. It does well in a pot.

My all-time favorite cactus is *Lophophora williamsii*, the *Peyote Cactus*. It's sort of a "botanical friend for life". Good qualities: extremely slow growing, very long-lived, small, does tricks and the seeds are fun to germinate. I like *Ferocactus hamatacanthus*, the *Fish Hook Cactus* and *Astrophytum myriostigma*, *Bishop's Cap*. *Old-man Cactus*, *Cephalocereus senilis*, is interesting and stays small so it is good in a dish garden.

Most of my cacti are in containers and displayed on shelves. Some of my favorites are: *Echinocactus grusonii*, *Golden Barrel Cactus*, looks nice in a grouping of three in a pot; *Echinocereus rigidissimus var. rubispinus*, *Rainbow Cactus*, has a ring of beautiful magenta flowers in the spring, which last seven to ten days; *Parodia chrysacanthion*, golden power puff, has a crown of small yellow flowers in the spring to summer. Quite pretty.

I think the *Saguaro cactus (Carnegiea gigantea)* is such a majestic specimen; it is the largest cactus in the U.S. They can grow up to 60' and live for 300 years - but being a klutz, it is best I admire them from afar. I do best with friendlier thornless cacti such as *Totem Pole (Lophocercus schottii montrose)*, with its unusual bumpy appearance or *Mistletoe Cactus (Rhipsalis baccifera)* decorating a hanging basket. Another painless choice is *Ariocarpus trigonus*, a very slow grower with upward growing stems between a woolly top and flowers from late spring into summer. *Holiday cactus (Schlumbergera bridgesii)* have colorful blooms and are relatively easy care. All of these can live in pots or baskets so they can be relocated when necessary and require very little winter water.

California Native Plants

Hard to define my favorite as I love all the salvias. I have Salvia apiana, S. leucophylla, S. clevelandii and S. brandegeei. Plus, I like 'Bee's Bliss', a hybrid between S. sonomensis and S. leucophylla. It is a ground cover that is 6-8 ft. in diameter and will replace some lawn. They all have delightful blooms in the spring and into summer and are very drought tolerant. They don't like overhead watering. I love the foliage fragrance when pruning them back after bloom time.

I absolutely love Ceanothus. The blue blossoms are such a beautiful color. They are so lovely dotting the foothills in the spring. I love my Irises. We planted them in the vegetable area a few years ago when we learned that parasitic wasps overwinter on them. They are so easy and require so little water, but are beautiful in the spring.

Have a new crush on the Crassula capitella or the 'Campfire' plant. As its common name suggests, this brilliant, upright succulent has bright yellow and orangey-red tips reminiscent of a dancing campfire. It also has a dash of green

chartreuse thrown in for extra delight. It requires little to no attention, which is just the kind of plant I need as my back and knees have become more and more disagreeable as I age.

One of my favorites is the Redbud tree/shrub (*Cercis*). It grows well in the foothills as well as here in valley. Bright magenta blooms in spring; forms seedpods & heart shaped leaves; beautiful fall colors with leaves turning gold and seedpods a dark red/brown. Low maintenance and lots of color!

Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulterii*) Maximum size: 8' x 10' but usually 4' x 6'. Pale blue-green leaves with huge fragrant white flowers from May to July. Well-drained granitic or sandy soils best and water once a month. Can take over if it is happy. Example: (Used to be) Sneeze-free garden at CSUF.

California certainly has a wonderful variety of native plants – my absolute favorite is the Giant Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), for its knock-your-socks off awe-inspiring majestic size and beauty.

Texas Ranger: I love the silver-grey foliage and the pink blooms in the summer. It is relatively clean, tough, requires little pruning, low water, full sun, frost hardy.

Cleveland Sage: Love the fragrant green foliage. Scent is wonderful. I also enjoy the blue flowers between May and August. Attracts hummingbirds, loves full sun, and low water.

One of my favorites is *Zauschneria* or California fuchsia. The original has real fine leaves and small red flowers but I found a nice variety at Intermountain Nursery. It has a more compact habit, broader grey green leaves and bigger flowers. Mine has been blooming since early August. After three years it is still less than a foot high and about 18" in diameter. I trim it back in late winter when it loses most of its leaves and looks kind of rough. That is the only time of the year that it looks bad.

This is really a tough one! My favorite native is whichever one happens to be in front of me. *Ceanothus*, *Carpenteria*, *Iris*, *Lupinus*, *Salvias*, *Mimulus*, *Penstemons*, and all the delicate little ones: *Phacelia*, *Nemophila*, *Godetia*, *Eschscholzia*... and so many others, most of which are difficult or impossible to cultivate. But there are some that thrive in the home landscape, enough to keep me happy until I can go up along the river or into the hills to visit my wild old friends.

One of my favorite natives is the *Carpenteria*. Fresno County is one of the places it grows; it can be found on the dry-granite ridges of the four-lane on highway 168 heading to Shaver and Huntington Lakes. It has oblong, thick dark green leaves, and large, flat, anemone like, white flowers with many yellow stamens. It blooms in May-June and is frequently compared to an oleander in its appearance. It can grow to be taller than 5'. I recently removed my plant from a pot and planted it in the ground; by frequently pruning I have kept the height around 4'. In my shady environment it has become a bit rangy; they seem to prefer a somewhat sheltered situation with sun for part of the day or protection from a large tree.

In my garden, a silvery-leaved form of California Fuschia (*Zauschneria californica* or *Epilobium canum*) has prospered with little attention and only moderate water in very sandy soil. I don't know the exact cultivar, but it seems to resemble *Z. californica* 'Bert's Bluff' as described in the Las Pilitas Nursery website. It is compact (12 to 24 inches tall), with very fine, narrow-leaved gray foliage setting off deep reddish-orange, trumpet-form flowers that bloom over a long period in late summer/fall -- and attract hummingbirds. Quite on its own, it has spread over several years to form a long patch, and probably would bloom even more liberally if it received full, rather than partial sun, and an occasional bit of compost or organic plant food. Las Pilitas lists many other cultivars of this lovely native, including Bush California Fuschia, said to be particularly well suited to San Joaquin Valley conditions.

With lots of shade, partial shade, and filtered shade, I appreciate shade-tolerant shrubs such as Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*). I have several plants of a compact cultivar (no idea which one). It is a fairly slow grower for me and tolerates low to moderate water in poor sandy soil, although the plants can get a little ratty if too drought-stressed. They are great evergreens, with shiny, spiny leaves that color reddish/purplish in cold weather, bloom bright yellow in winter/early spring, and attract birds with frosty blue berries. Apparently they can spread by creeping rhizomes, but mine haven't yet done so.

In the sun, I love Cleveland Sage (*Salvia clevelandii* 'Winifred Gilman') and California Poppies! This salvia has soft, gray-green foliage and lavender-blue flowers, and to me the fragrance is absolutely heavenly (I gather some folks find it unpleasantly strong). It grows to be a large shrub, requires excellent drainage in garden situations and needs little water when established. It is a wildlife magnet, as are California poppies, which once planted, obligingly tend to come back again every year, sending up lovely, finely cut blue-gray foliage in the winter before beginning a long period of bloom in the spring. I'm a great fan of our golden state flower, but also like the creamy white and scarlet versions.

Climbing Roses

When I went into Chris Hays' backyard, there were two or three **Joseph's Coat Climbers** blooming in profusion on the entire back wall of her garage. The mixtures of pink, yellow, orange, red were breathtaking!-----

My very favorite Floribunda Rose is the climber **Stairway to Heaven**. A true red with ruffled flowers, prolific multi-seasons bloomer, contrasted with dark green glossy foliage. One stem is a whole bouquet. Light sweet fragrance-----
Sally Holmes...(Antique climber) white single with blush of pink...prolific bloomer twice a summer...does beautifully as a pillar rose...when our pillars are in bloom the blossoms are so thick you can hardly see the leaves
Sutter's Gold(Hybrid tea) miniature yellow...2-3' high...branched blooming stems...clear butter yellow...climbing

Handel...(Climber) creamy white edged with a thin neat line of deep pink/red...hearty bloomer all spring/summer/fall...glossy dark green foliage, disease resistant...great on a fence.
I like **Don Juan**. Red bloom doesn't have much of a scent but is a reliable bloomer in the valley.-----

Here are my favorite climbing roses:

America- large, salmon pink in color, double bloom and very fragrant.

Graham Thomas-deep yellow rose, double bloom and fragrant, can be trained as a climber.

Zephirine Drouhin-deep rose pink, semi double rose, thorn less and very fragrant, tolerates some shade.

Blaze-red, semi-double rose, somewhat fragrant, continuous bloomer and very hardy.-----

My favorites are climbing **First Prize**-Pink Blend, very LARGE blooms, **Eden**-pink & cream old-fashioned looking rose, **Pearly Gates**-pink and lots of blooms, **America**-Orange Pink, beautiful, and **High Society**- deep pink, a gorgeous rose I now have only one climbing rose which is **Don Juan**. I love its fragrance, color and the abundance of flowers. I can't get it to climb on the rounded trellis, but let it lay out in a horizontal fashion instead. It's a vigorous bush. I had another one that died after a few years, but this one going strong with new canes and I'm sure it's at least 10 years old.-----

There are two climbers in the Children's Garden that I really like. One on an arbor in the upper entrance is an **Antique Bourbon**-the fragrance is awesome, thornless, a fuchsia color but pretty much only blooms once. Another one along the side wall under the cottonwood tree is a **Joseph's Coat** of many colors. It has spectacular multicolored blooms which boom continuously. Has nice rosehips also.-----

The **John Cabot** rose can climb to ten feet and works well on a small arbor or something similar. It blooms from early summer to fall, needs full sun with well draining soil, and is hardy in zones 3-9. The flowers are a magenta color, have a spicy fragrance, and, according to the tag, are edible(!)-----

I have two favorite climbing roses. **Sombreuil** (introduced 1850), quartered small white flowers, dark green leaves-good heat tolerance, disease and pest resistance. The other is **Souvenir de la Malmaison** (introduced 1893), a climbing bourbon rose, pink quartered flowers, good spring bloom, re-blooms lightly through the rest of the season. Susceptible to balling in wet weather and black spot. Both roses have a lovely, strong fragrance and are planted surrounding my vegetable patch. Makes working there very pleasant.-----

My favorite climbing roses are **Peace, America, Polka, and First Prize**. They all are fragrant with beautiful large blooms that remain on the plant and do not shatter easily. **America** and **First Prize** hold their color in our hot weather. I love **Sally Holmes** for its many unusual blooms. I also love my **Abraham Darby** and **Broadway** roses which I have trained to act as a climber. One of my favorites is **Orthello** for its beautiful, fragrant magenta blooms. The downside of this rose is its **many many** thorns. -----

I have always loved **Altissimo**. It is a single-petaled rose (5-7 petals) and is a bright red with nice showy stamens. It produces very large lovely orange-red hips if it is not dead-headed. This rose was introduced in 1966 and has consistently been one of the highest rated Lcl (large climber) roses by ARS members. It does not have a noticeable scent. It is always one of the first roses to bloom in my garden. It has a large first bloom, doesn't bloom much all summer and then has another good bloom in October.-----

I have four climbers and they are all favorites:

Graham Thomas is a very nice shade of yellow. I have it growing on a fence. It's a double-flowered David Austin. A good spring bloomer then blooms intermittently throughout the summer and fall. Nice fragrance.

Lace Cascade is white double-flowered and has **Iceberg** as a parent. Not too fragrant but is a long bloomer, even into winter. Grows on an arbor. (The hoplia beetle loves it!)

New Dawn is pale pink double-flowered with a slight fragrance. Very vigorous. Grows on an arbor. Good bloomer in spring and then intermittently throughout summer and fall.

Don Juan (my #1 favorite). A beautiful large double-flowered dark velvety red. The first to bloom in spring and keeps blooming through summer and fall. Grows on an arbor. Nicely fragrant.-----

Eden- prolific bloomer, beautiful shade of pink, has look of old English rose.

Joseph's Coat- love the way it changes colors as it ages, bright cheery colors, from red to coral to pink and yellow, all on one flower!-----

Two climbers that I planted as bareroots 20+ years ago remain my favorites. I found them through Roses of Yesterday and Today in Watsonville. Both were bred in Germany.

The first is a Kordesii rose called **Dortmund**, introduced in 1955. I planted 3 along a 25 foot length of fence and they now completely cover it. The single blooms (5 petals each) are about 3.5 in. across, cherry red with white centers and ruffled edges. Each branch produces multiple buds and when they all bloom at once...WOW! The foliage is dark green, almost holly-like. They bloom repeatedly from spring to fall and have wonderful orange hips in the fall.

The second is a Gartendirektor rose called **Otto Linne**, introduced in 1934. It's really a shrub rose but can be trained as a small climber because it has a nice arching habit. I have it supported by a corner trellis where my fences come together. It has grown over the top of the fence and out about 3 ft. on each side. Each cane is covered with fully double small pink blooms in the spring and they smell a bit like carnations. Reminds me of an old-fashioned English garden.-----

Okay - here's the whole story... I have a **Golden Showers** variety over the backyard gate entrance. Beautiful, hardy, easy-care, etc. etc. Well, I hired someone (very well known, came to me via excellent recommendations) to help me a couple of years ago because I was so busy and they chop-shopped it...AND it has been struggling ever since. Sigh. Anyway, I did some work on it this past weekend and I finally decided what moves I need to make this winter SO I hope to assist in the recuperation process. I have a cutting of it in another area of the back garden and it is doing very well. I also have a *David Austin* (pink with many petals) climbing up the back balcony which is beautiful. And I started a couple of cuttings of that along the east fence, which are happy, too. Oh, and I have a climbing floribunda out front - the tag said 'climber', so I bought it and I don't know if it is supposed to be a climber, but I trim it that way, so there you have it. And I have a climbing **Iceberg** along the east fence mixed in with the David Austin. (Another one of those that was marked 'climbing rose'). OH, and one more - with several cuttings planted around the garden, too, **Dream Weaver**. It's a pale salmon color. I bought a **New Dawn** variety out of a catalog a long time ago - supposed to be perfect for shady spots - and I have transplanted it a couple of times and FINALLY it likes where I put it. It's amazing to me how resilient roses can be. Oh, and one more - a 'root stock' rose volunteer that we tried and tried to get rid of - to no avail - so we finally gave in and let it have its own way AND now it almost covers the entire roof of the gazebo.---

I am a big fan of **Altissimo**. A single red rose with yellow stamens, in full sun it fills out beautifully. I do not notice any fragrance.-----

My favorite climber is **Eden Rose Climber**, a Meilland company rose developed in response to the Austin roses. The flowers are old-fashioned looking, heavy, cup-shaped, fully double; a delicate pink edged with deeper pink. As they open they become paler. Leaves are a shiny, dark green; very little fragrance. They are repeat bloomers if cut back after the first set of blooms. Heavy pruning is necessary. Don't like wet weather so bouquets should be picked before rain. Needs a strong trellis.-----

Joseph's Coat hands down. The many different shades of rose, peach and yellow make this one come alive with color and unlike many climbers if pruned correctly you will get continued blooms till frost! It reminds me of what my grandmother's roses all smelled like the perfect rose scent :-)-----

My fav is the climbing **Joseph's Coat** rose. It will have many colors including yellow, orange, pink and red all on one flower cluster and good news, they have many clusters. Flowers are considered to be doubles and they are repeat bloomers. It has bright green foliage but be warned, it is quite thorny so wear long protective rose pruning gloves (yes, I have some and they go probably half-way up my arm and I have long arms) and avoid next to a walk or it will seem to reach out and grab you. When in bloom, it is quite stunning!!!-----

Climbing Angel Face - Attractive dark glossy green foliage with large lavender blossoms with ruffled edges. A prolific bloomer with long lasting flowers, strong fragrance and a petal count of 30.

Altissimo - Vigorous climber with striking bright red single-petaled blossoms (4-8 count) set against dark green foliage. It is lightly scented, slightly shade tolerant and really makes a statement.

Sally Holmes - Vigorous climber with peachy-pink buds that open to creamy white single long-lasting flowers (5-7 petals), held in huge clusters on strong stems that are nearly thornless. Somewhat shade tolerant with a light scent and glossy green leaves.

Golden Showers - Large semi-double flowers have loosely ruffled petals (20-30 petal count). Color begins bright yellow, then fades to cream. A prolific bloomer, nearly continuous bloom (great to cover a garage wall). Slightly shade tolerant with a light fragrance.

Eden - Attractive foliage and fully double cabbage-shaped flowers (55-60 petal count). Blossoms are creamy white with bright pink edges, giving it an old-fashioned, romantic, fairy-tale look (delightful over an arbor). Not as reliably ever-blooming, but the spring and fall displays make it worth growing. Moderate fragrance.-----

I have a FAVORITE climbing rose: **Joseph's Coat!** It is on my front fence and blooms with a bright red and then yellow and red and it keeps changing. Beautiful!!! Not much fragrance, but very striking. All the people who walk on our street stop to tell us how beautiful it is!!-----

Although I've not grown this particular climber, my daughter has (she lives on the central coast) and I have seen it in all its glory. **Cecil Brunner** is the name and it is a prolific bloomer. Soft pink in color, it is a beauty. There are two others which I have grown, **Blaze** is one and I can't remember the other rose. I look.-----

I have **Don Juan** on my entire back fence inter-planted with creeping fig. Although harder to prune, the deep red blossoms against the solid green foliage is lovely. I have a miniature climber, **Rainbow's End**, that starts out with yellow buds, then yellow with red tips and finally a red when fully opened. -----

Floribunda Roses

It's hard to pick a favorite floribunda, but one does come to mind that has been such a pleasure. It's called **September Mourn**, a commemorative rose in honor of 9-11. It is a true white floribunda and was hybridized from **Iceberg** and **Sunflare**. Bill at Gazebo recommended it when I was looking for an ever blooming white. I was going to go with **Iceberg**

and he talked me into this one. I think the canes are a bit more substantial, not too droopy, the blooms are good sized and can be used as cut flowers. I planted 5 under my living room window and they have performed beautifully year after year, in fact they are still blooming.

Floribundas have lots of blooms, shorter, easier to care for and great garden display. I love them.

Angel Face---lavender/purple/pink with ruffled individual petals...intense lemony rose scent...bushes compact and nicely branching.

*I am quite fond of **Betty Prior**. As the blooms age, there are several colors of pink on the bush. But my all time favorite is **Betty Boop**. I love bicolors, and this one is cream and red with bright yellow stamens. The blooms last a very long time either on the bush or cut. .*

I would say that the two favorite floribundas growing in my garden are **Angel Face** for its lovely fragrance, wavy petals, stamina and color. The other is **Sentimental** which has good fragrance and no two flowers alike but always striking.

'Iceberg' - a vigorous, thornless plant with white flowers, glossy light green leaves and great utilitarian versatility, from blending into the border to serving as a showcased specimen. 35-40 petal count and an 8.7 rating by the American Rose Society.

'Angel Face' - compact plant with glossy dark green foliage and fragrant lavender blossoms with slightly ruffled petals. 25-30 petal count, 1969 All America Rose Selection winner and an 8.1 rating from the American Rose Society.

'Showbiz' - smaller plant with brilliant red flowers and dark green foliage. 20-25 petal count, 1985 All America Rose Selection winner and an 8.6 rating from the American Rose Society.

There are so many lovely roses but I guess I will the nod to **Betty Boop**. It just blooms nonstop and is easy to care for. Great focal point too.

Small Flowering Shrubs

I love Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. It likes partial shade and blooms in the spring. Its starts out with blue flowers that fade to violet and finally to white. A true winner!

My absolute favorite is Agapanthus 'Queen Anne.' I typically can get 30 to 40 flowers per plant per year and have actually counted into the 60's on one plant. They grow best in sun with some protection from the late afternoon summer sun such as on the east side of a house. They usually flower in June and July but not rare to see some start in May or still be there into August, flowering blue. As our summers are hot, the flowers tend to be a faded blue and if planted on the coast where it is cooler, they tend to have darker flowers.

I have several varieties of Agapanthus, including 'Elaine' that blooms later in my yard and is still blooming as we approach the middle of September. Others would include 'Tinkerbell' and 'Summer Gold' that are variegated foliage varieties but seem to have few flowers.

Escallonia 'Compakta'

A compact evergreen mound of small shiny leaves and reddish pink flowers that slowly grows to only 2 to 3 feet tall, partial to full sun. Moderate water. Makes a lovely low border that requires no shearing. Blooms in spring and fall.

Coleonema pulchrum 'Sunset Gold'

An evergreen small shrub with lovely fragrance and pale pink flowers in winter to spring. The most attractive characteristic of this plant is the feathery yellowish-green foliage which provides a jolt of color to the garden year-round.

Full sun to part shade with good drainage. Moderate water.

Abelia grandiflora 'Sunrise'

A small rounded evergreen shrub with bright, glossy variegated foliage. Fragrant white flowers in summer and fall. Makes a beautiful landscape specimen in partial sun. Moderate water. Evergreen to semi-evergreen.

Right now, September, I love my Dwarf Plumbago, bright blue, cascading, mixes well with orange colored flowering plants. Easy keeper, minimum water needed once it's settled in about a year. It starts to bloom in August and lasts about six weeks. Needs sun but will tolerate afternoon shade if not too dark. Otherwise it'll spread but won't bloom much.

It's hard to pick a favorite! One I like very much is Salvia greggii 'Navajo' red. Mine was planted in the sun with a bit of dappled shade during the middle of the afternoon. I had two other Salvia greggii's flanking it in the space in the Lipstick variety. The 'Navajo' became my favorite. It is a beautiful bright shade of red. The other plants in this bed were hot pink zonal geraniums, lavender, yellow and orange daylily and a beautiful pink rose. It sounds crazy, but it worked well intertwined with a birdbath and some boulders. I also had a low growing purple plant that I never knew the name of! It was just there and beautiful. I recently moved from that residence and truly miss my beautiful garden.

One of my favorite shrubs is the Plumbago auriculata or Cape Plumbago.

The abundant sky blue flowers are beautiful and really stand out from the green foliage. The plant blooms from March to December and has a rather carefree growth in that it can be staked or allowed to mound. Good drainage is necessary; once established very little water is required. A heavy frost can cause leaf drop, but it is a tough plant and recovers quickly. Plant in full sun - a little bit of shade is okay - and enjoy!

I'm not sure of the definition of "small". But my fave for dependability, ease of maintenance, toughness, and beauty in bloom and in leaf is Loropetalum. Any of the varieties have their charms, but for me, the brighter raspberry the blossoms and the deeper violet the foliage, the better. There is a variety that reaches a max of about 5'. Most are in the 6 to 8 foot range, but prunable. I keep mine at about 3 1/2 feet. They bloom in spring and rebloom all year, depending on pruning. They will survive in any conditions. I have some in shade, some in sun. Foliage color and bloom is better in sun, and they can take it. They seem to have average to below average water requirements in the SJ Valley. They require average

water until they are established. They also seem resistant to insects and diseases, at least I have never seen any damage.

One of my absolute favorites (it was my grandmother's favorite too, and my mother's) is Daphne. The flowers have the most amazing fragrance, like no other flower. They typically bloom for me in late fall/early winter, although in the article I linked I think it says they bloom in May - that has NEVER been my experience. I love the shrub. It's a pretty little thing, very hardy and reliable. The variegated foliage is nice, and for me it's almost entirely pest-free. It does require regular watering, but also needs to stay well drained. I have really good success with Daphne in containers.

I seem to focus on what color the foliage is and don't pay a lot of attention to the flowers but one of my favorites is Santolina. It has fine gray/white foliage and gets yellow button like flowers in late spring/early summer. It can grow 2ft high and 4ft around if not cut back severely in the late winter. Left alone the old growth becomes woody. Best thing about it is that it loves the sun and survives on almost no water but will tolerate water necessary for more fussy perennials. It is very aromatic, having a turpentine-like smell. Because of that, nothing eats it and it seems to be pest free.

My favorite small flowering shrub is the lilac. It grows to perfection on the east coast. Varieties have been introduced to our climate in the Central Valley but still do not outperform the growing conditions in the east. Their traditional purple color bloom in the spring and their fragrance make it an outstanding shrub. Drip irrigation is preferable since leaves prefer not getting wet.

My favorite small perennial shrubs are the Spireas, starting with Anthony Waterer and Spirea Shibori moving on to the beautiful Bridal Wreath, then on to the fabulous lime green ones whose names I can no longer remember.

Spiraea bumalda 'Anthony Waterer' blooms all summer. Blooms on new growth so when it gets shabby shear it off and gets lots of new growth and hot pink flowers. Also I like Ruellia brittoniana 'Katie', dwarf to about a foot, blooms all summer, very compact plant (leaves look like a peach tree but longer and darker.) My favorite with annuals in front for a great border. I like the larger variety also but it is very rangy and hard to keep compact. Common name is Mexican Petunia.

My all time favorite is Alstromeria. I like the low ones the best because they don't completely die back in the summer. They bloom spring through fall and stay green in the winter. Takes our full sun but can handle half-day shade. Comes in white, pinks, peach, lavender, reds, wine, yellow and orange.

Weigela florida 'Variegata'.

Masses of beautiful pink flowers in spring & the foliage is as distinctive as the pink flowers. Its oval leaves are variegated—green edged with creamy white. Shade to part sun. Pest and disease resistant, not much seems to bother them. Relatively drought tolerant after established. I have these in front of my front porch (about 4-5 years) and they give a sort of "woody" feel - I hardly prune them.

Technically Impatiens are a perennial. Eastern exposure. I use ten with my ferns & as a border along the front sidewalk. One nice thing is they are so low maintenance. They drop their spent flowers & bloom prolifically for months until frost. I have had success with mixing impatiens with my succulents in containers. In mild winters, some last & come back the next season. Some day I'll get on the ball & protect them.

The other favorite is Columbines, the state flower of Colorado. Same exposure. Both don't mind not much water.

Salvias and Lavenders among my roses are my favorites

I like the small Texas Ranger called 'Lynn's Legacy'. It's a UCD arboretum all-star. We saw it at McCall's on our tour.

One of these days I'll buy one for my yard.

One of my current favorite perennials is Carolina phlox. I have a bright pink and a white. They bloom all summer and will send out new blooms in late summer if pinched back. They don't self-sow like other phlox. They do well in full or part sun. They grow to 2 feet tall and need dividing only if crowded, every 3-5 years. I bought them at a nursery in the spring several years ago. I can't think of a single problem I've had with them. You get a lot of bang for your buck with these plants.

Campanula porcharskyana -- one of the loveliest clumping forms 8" of perennial blue violet flowers. Perfect for front of the border, rock gardens and under roses. I have under planted my China Doll roses with this lovely long-lived perennial. It has been growing and blooming for 15 years! Now that's a perennial! Spring into middle of summer bloom time.

I have several Lavenders planted along a dry creek bed. They are on different shades of blue and purple. They include Spanish and Goodwin Creek Gray varieties. They are especially striking during spring bloom. After trimming them back mid summer they bloom again and are very pretty with the yellow gazanias.

My favorite small flowering shrub is the Daphne odorata. The fragrance of the flowers in late winter/early spring is exquisite. I have one in the shade of a peach tree and one in a pot on my front porch.

Who doesn't love purple with a splash of orange in the garden when this perennial's really biggest splash is purple leaves with hot pink small flowers in the earliest of spring. A Loropetalum a.k.a Fringe Flower, is a delight the year round. It also prunes well to create interesting bonsai type shapes.

Houseplants

It seems I cannot get enough houseplants; I am running out of areas with good light. A few choices: **Ferns**, such as *Nephrolepis exaltata* or *Pteris cretica* add a tropical beauty to a room. **Palms**, such as the *Date Palm*, *Phoenix dactylifera* and *Parlor Palm*, *Chamaedorea elegans* do too and usually need less care and make an impressive display. *African Violet*, *Saintpaulia ionantha*, is a favorite for the variety of blooms, foliage and size among them. Plus, they are easy to propagate and fun to create new plants for friends. *Rex begonia* has beautiful multi-colored leaves and *Anthurium scherzerianum* have a unusual looking spathe-like flower.

My favorite houseplant is an **Aglaonema, Chinese Evergreen**. It is very easy to grow and does not seem to be fussy about anything. It has very large, variegated leaves. I have a very, very large plant in my front room where it receives morning light from the east. The plant was given to me as a gift in 1984, (yes, 29 years ago). It is beautiful and is known as the "shrub" in the front room.

African Violets

I love **violets!** Have a perfect location for them in our living room. Every time one blooms it makes me smile! Here are my "best picks" for home and for office. Home plants definitely run to the weird-and-wonderful, office plants are selected for flourishing with no natural light.

Home:

Mistletoe Fig *Ficus deltoidea*: beautifully shaped, with leaves and fruit that looks a bit like mistletoe berries

African Mask *Alocasia X amaxonica*: glorious large arrow-head shaped 12+" leaves, dark green with white veining...needs just the right light and plenty of humidity

Purple Velvet Plant *Gynura aurantiaca*: dark purple plush leaves abundant grower small ugly orange flowers very easy to propagate vulnerable to white fly

Christmas/Thanksgiving cacti *Schlumbergera cultivars*: I have three that bloom hysterically during the Chocolate Season

Hindu Rope Plant *Hoya compacta* and other hoyas... curled closely set leaves on long training stems, comes in green and variegated tiny highly scented star-shaped blooms...looks very "Star Trek"

Sea Onion *Bowiea volubilis*: fat glossy green bulb that sprouts 4' strands of frothy green with occasional tiny white flowers propagates by both baby bulbs and large bulb division

My office at work has virtually no natural light and two 1960s fluorescent ceiling fixtures. After much trial and error, I find the following plants grow lushly in such conditions:

Palm *Chamaedorea species* (I have one that is 17 and one that is 38 years old)

Swiss Cheese Plant *Monstera adansonii*

Prayer Plants *Maranta leuconeura*

Peace Lily *Spathiphyllum*

Devil's Ivy *Pothos*: long luxuriant vines in green, green/white, and green/gold. Cuttings root very easily

My favorite house plant is ***euphorbia trigona* or African Milk Bush**. I was given one small plant and now have four 6' plants that form a hedge in my living room. It looks like a green cactus-very unique looking. I recently had two visitors from the Congo who recognized the plant but said it grows outside in Africa. I need to prune and would be glad to share the cuttings. It is very easy to propagate.

My favorite houseplant has to be the following:

Botanical Name: ***Ficus benjamina***

Common Name: **Weeping Fig**

I bought a really small one gallon one back in the summer of 1975 while I was attending Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. I had a summer job working for a W. T. Grant Store and I bought this one from their nursery department. I still have it almost 38 years later and it is still a vibrant, healthy houseplant. It has survived my moving a few times, albeit not without some leaf drop, and has become a family memory, especially with my daughters who had to endure family dinners with this Ficus brushing their head next to our dining room table as this was the best light location for it and it did very well there. The ficus is lush and green, gets small figs on it on occasion, and I try to keep it around 7 or 8' tall by 7' or so in width so I can still grow it in the house.

My second favorite houseplants are some **orchids** that I have been growing the last several years that bloom regularly and keeps flowers blooming for months. In fact, one has been putting out multiple flower stems recently and a couple of flowers have just opened. It will bring beauty and smiles for a while to come.

Two of my favorites:

Snake Plant (*Mother-in-Law's Tongue*)--*Sansevieria*: Hardy, easy to grow. Low maintenance. Will tolerate low light areas. One of the best plants for improving indoor air quality. I love the variegation in the leaves.

Prayer Plant--*Maranta leuconeura*: Leaves have beautiful colors and patterns. I enjoy seeing the leaves fold up at night.

The only houseplant which thrives in my house under low light conditions is ***Pothos*, *Epipremnum aureum***. I love **African violets**, but they rarely bloom because I don't have a good place for them.

I have a new fondness for **succulents**. I took a class on dish gardening recently, and made one there, and another I have was a gift. Both are cute. I also have a rather large one in my bathroom.

Hybrid Tea Roses

Two of my favorites: ***Painted Moon***, which has a beautiful multicolored red and yellow flower with a subtle fragrance. It is eye-catching in the garden and does well as a cut flower. In contrast, with its strong spicy scent, is ***Fulton Mackay***, a bright yellow rose, with plentiful foliage, and good rain resistance.

Chrysler Imperial----a medium red, handsomely shaped rose that in its climbing version can throw an 8' branch with buds in every stage from tightly closes to full...what a stunner!

Mister Lincoln--the absolute best red rose, a velvety red so rich and dark it almost has a black under-cast. Spectacular scent. Blooms on long stems so it make a wonderful "solo" rose for picking. Very long blooming season.

Double Delight----creamy white with dark pink/light red outer petals. Looks terrific when grouped with **Handel** (smaller creamy white climber with red outlining on each petal) and **Magic Carousel** (a Ralph Moore miniature that is also creamy white with red outlining)

and in my late mother's memory **Tropicana** a clear fiery coral/orange...she used to grow them in Oregon where they were glorious in the cooler summer temperatures.

I do not think that **Peace** can be beat. The flowers are large, pale yellow edged in pink. Fragrance is light but the plant is hardy and vigorous with shiny green leaves.

If you like white roses then **John F Kennedy** is a great choice. It is both very fragrant and disease resistant

1. **Yves Piaget** Deep Pink Very Fragrant
2. **Oklahoma** Dark Red Very Fragrant
3. **Barbra Streisand** Mauve Very Fragrant
4. **Apricot Blend** Fragrant
5. **Color Magic** Pink Blend Slight Fragrant -----Very favorite

I have several favorite HT roses but the following ones have been in my garden for some time and are very, very hearty, fairly disease resistant, big bloomers, and beautiful as well!

Diana, Princess of Wales --Pink/Cream -- med fragrance

Brandy -- Apricot blend -- med fragrance

Touch of Class -- Orange Pink -- med fragrance-

Voluptuous~Dark Pink~Light Fragrance

Double Delight~Pale Yellow w/Red edges~Strong Sweet Fragrance-----

Bewitched -- Huge medium pink blossoms, strong fragrance, 1967 All-America Rose Selection winner.

Midas Touch -- Eye-popping deep yellow flowers, medium fragrance, 1994 All-America Rose Selection winner.

Mister Lincoln -- Classic dark red flowers, strong fragrance, 1965 All-America Rose Selection winner.

Just Joey -- Huge orange/apricot flowers, strong fragrance.

The McCartney Rose~ medium pink, old rose/strong scent.

Peace~pale yellow with rosy/pink edges, light fragrance.

Double Delight~pale yellow with red edges, spicy/sweet fragrance.-----

I have two favorites. I have three each of these. **Mister Lincoln**~ deep red in color and smell heavenly. A bouquet of these will permeate the air in the house. My other is **Double Delight**~Cream throat sort of with red / pink edging. Again the smell is wonderful. These are my two very favorites. I would have no problem buying another one and adding into the garden

My favorite hybrid tea is **Jardins de Bagatelle** named after the Paris rose garden. Perfect shape as it unfurls, champagne pink in cooler weather, does not tolerate heat well at all, production stops, petals dry out and turn papery. But worth extra effort for the intense rose fragrance. I moved it from full sun, planted into the garden, into a pot on casters kept on the patio where it can be moved into the shade during the worst heat. The perfume adds romance to our patio nights.

I need to be concerned with the amount of sun that I do not get in my garden for the optimal growth of the hybrid tea roses. I like **Mister Lincoln** for the flowers and **Peace** for the color. Both of these seem to do ok in my less than sunny back yard. Certainly I do not get 5 to 6 hours of perfect sun a day.

Oklahoma~deep red~strong old fashioned scent

Peace~Creamy White with Pink edges~mild rose scent

Sunblest ~Yellow~Mild rose scent

The **Sunblest** is marked hybrid tea but it performs like a floribunda in my garden.

Bewitched	Clear pink	Strong damask
Brandy	Golden Bronze	Mild
Chrysler Imperial	Dark Crimson	Strong
Double Delight	Soft deep red edges	Expensive perfume
First Prize	Rose pink w/ ivory pink reverse	Nutty/tea
Heirloom	Magenta to lilac	Strong
Just Joey	Rich copper and soft apricot	Tea/strong clove
Midas Touch	Golden Yellow	Rich musk

Mister Lincoln Velvety deep red Strong damask
Oklahoma Deep velvet red Strong rose

My favorites are **Henry Fonda**- intense yellow

Just Joey- peachy/orange

First Love pale pink and deeper pink slight fragrance

Just Joey orange blend slight fragrance

My favorite hybrid tea rose is **Barbra Streisand**. It has a wonder purple/pink flower that is a good size and it smells really good. My second favorite is **Secret** which blooms all summer long with its light pink/dark pink flowers that have a wonderful fragrance

Pink Peace-beautiful color-i think it looks like raspberry sorbet-fair scent

Glowing Peace-great color too. Yellow-orange tones-

Actually, all the Peace roses are great!

Apricot Nectar is also great-can have multiple blooms, nice creamy-peachy color and great scent

I love **Gemini** had since 2004~ lovely bi color of pink and white, light fragrance. Also high on my list would be *b* ~a deep pink with 55 petals and a strong fragrance, big plant over 6 feet
3rd would be **Whisper**~ light scent and pure white, vigorous grower.

I like the **Princess of Monaco** or commonly called **Princess Grace** rose which is a cream color with magenta edged petals and it does have a fragrance.

Hot Cocoa (floribunda) and **Honey Dijon** are both unique but look really nice together in a bouquet.

Non-Favorite Invasive Plants

And the winner is....**Mexican Evening Primrose**...an invasive plant for a whopping 9 of you. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this article. What a list we have! I realize I have several in my garden...some not so bad and others I'm taking a second look at.

My invasive plant is **Plumbago**, a fall blooming ground cover. It is impossible to contain or keep from spreading. If I had it to do over again, I'd only plant it where it would be the only understory plant, with tall seasonal things, like narcissus, interspersed. Then there is the **Bermuda grass**...

My personal List From Hell:

Passion Vine (virtually impossible to eradicate...can develop stems as thick as your wrist and climb to the tops of mature trees)

Honeysuckle

Mullein (reseeds forever)

Mints

Bamboos

Vanilla Grass

Yellow Lady Banksia Rose (one of my favorite roses, but becomes wildly invasive if not disciplined regularly)

Artemisia vulgaris 'Oriental Limelight' -- a very pretty variegated Artemisia, but spreads by rhizomes and hard to get rid of.

Viola odorata – Sweet Violet – spreads by runners and seeds (which must be explosive since they pop up a long way from the original plant and in container plants).

Imperata cylindrica – Japanese Blood Grass – after time, very invasive by runners. Also tends to revert to green from the original red blades.

Pennisetum alopecuroides 'Moudry' – Black Fountain Grass—a handsome plant with gorgeous black flowers. Not listed anywhere as invasive, but propagates easily from the seeds, which show up in odd places, especially thrives in the middle of other plants. Seedlings do not pull out readily – have to be literally dug up!

Nassella tenuissima – Mexican Feather Grass – extremely tiny seeds spread by adhering to pets' fur and gardeners' clothes, plus propagates very easily when plants are watered by overhead sprinklers. But seedlings pull up easily by hand and remove by hula hoe. Can be very invasive, but is so pretty swinging in the breeze, and looks so good, that I keep several anyway

Creeping Fig takes over the world.

Mexican primrose, Poplar trees, Robinia trees, Golden Rain trees, as best I can tell every seed from the seed pods wants to be a tree!

Yes. I love the **Blue Morning Glory**. I planted a gallon container many years ago and but thought it had died. Two years later, while driving down Herndon (we are the second home in from Herndon) I spotted blue flowers very high up in our eucalyptus trees. I discovered the vines had grown along the ground for 30 or 40 feet then gone through the fence to my neighbor's side searching for the sun, then climbed the trees. I am still trying to get rid of the vines, although I have to admit, I do love those flowers! It's just that they climb over everything. So beware.

A friend of mine was speaking at his mother's funeral service. "Mom gave me one piece of advice. She said never plant **Bamboo**. Unfortunately I did not listen to her." This is a true story and I always think of her when someone mentions bamboo.

Mexican Primrose, Verbena rigida, the colorful **Yarrows**.

Oh yeah! **Violets, Vinca major and minor, Creeping Charlie, Mexican Primrose, Baby's Tears**. Also I like **Nandina**, but it sends out runners like crazy, so I'm forever ripping out the runners and pruning out the huge bushes. They don't call it "**Heavenly Bamboo**" for nothing. It certainly acts like Bamboo.

Penny Royal --I put it in my backyard as an ant repellent -- and yes, it is! I have no ants in my backyard, but I do have Penny Royal everywhere --it is obviously a mint, as it smells delicious, and you can hang bunches of dried Penny Royal in your pantry and again, no ants!

Japanese Spurge is another one. I did not put it in, but my next door neighbors did, and it continually comes through the fence. Her turtles and tortoises love it, but I do not. It is VERY invasive.

I have a very strong love/hate relationship with these three:

Nigella damascena, Love in a Mist, a beautiful, vivid blue flower in fern like foliage. Blooms for a couple weeks in early May but is a big job to eliminate the dried plants, heavy self-seeder.

Salvia uliginosa, beautiful bright blue flowers, 6' tall but plants quickly spread on underground runners.

Gaura lindheimeri, beautiful pink flowers, clumping plants with a wand-like flower stem but it spreads everywhere.

The song from my childhood, "**Sweet Violets**, sweeter than all the roses; covered all over from head to toe, covered all over, with sweet violets..." and the refrain begins again and again, just like the volume of violets that have taken over my front yard almost everywhere except where I actually planted them! Shared by a friend, I cannot say I wasn't duly warned, but I couldn't imagine those sweet violets could take on a life of their own, but they have, again and again! Willing to share...

I continue to enjoy **Verbena.(V.bonariensis)** although it self-seeds exceedingly. This tall 3-6 ft. tall perennial is airy with branching stems and widely spaced basal leaves. The purple flowers are small clusters. The advantage of this perennial is that it has a see-through quality which mixes especially well with roses.

I have found **Blackberries** and **Privets** to pop up wherever they are not wanted, thanks to the birds that eat the berries that grow on these plants. In short order, seedlings can take over an area from the established landscape, mixing in with, and stealing nutrients from, other plants. Even with repeated removal, the seeds can germinate and infiltrate new territory. Then, to add further insult, mockingbirds will make dive-bomb attacks on human blackberry pickers!

I love my 'invasive' plant! I first saw it at a retreat along the coast of Big Sur. Finally found a plant at UC Santa Cruz Arboretum. It is **Romenya coulteri**, commonly called **Matilija Poppy**. Even more commonly called the **Fried-Egg Plant** because of the appearance of the large white flowers with the yellow 'yoke'. The leaves are soft and silvery. Western Sunset says "Spectacular plant to 6 - 8 ft. or taller, spreading indefinitely by rhizomes." I planted mine on the south side of my house and it has definitely spread indefinitely! I'm familiar with new plants coming up in driveway cracks, in a rose bed 20 ft away, in the planting strip that has a cement sidewalk in between, but I was weeding my camellias on the north side of my house, and saw a sprout there. I don't know what is growing underneath my house! Even though it grows readily once established, it is difficult to propagate. The best suggestion is to dig up rooted suckers from spreading roots. To start from seed, put the seeds into a foil-lined flat, burn pine needles on top for 30 min., then water and hope for sprouting. It is drought tolerant. I cut it back to the ground in the Fall, and didn't water it at all last year. Now it is up to my eaves. Full sun; zones 4-12

Mexican Primrose. It looked nice for a while but when I wanted to remove it, it kept coming back. After 5 years of digging, and herbicides I still am fighting it.

Oenothera (Mexican Primrose) Innocently bought this many years ago, and still am finding it popping up. In the beginning it's okay, but wow....it takes over! Too bad it won't stay where it belongs, the pink flower is rather pretty. I am digging it out again this year.

Mint of all types is very invasive, but since we use it often in cooking or salads I continue to deal with it. I have two patches now and I must continually monitor the borders of each patch or before I know it, it is someplace where I don't want it. I also find **Cannas** invasive. I had one patch actually displacing some bricks in a brick path. Believe it or not, my **Maidenhair Fern** is rather invasive. A small patch has begun to overtake a shady area in my side yard. Another plant that I continue to deal with but also enjoy very much is **Jasmine**. It does require constant maintenance to keep the plant beds and vines where they belong. My wife really loves **Sweet Peas**, but when they become senescent and need to be pulled, it is almost impossible to keep the seeds from ending up in many places in your yard. You find out where they were inadvertently dropped the following year when they germinate. Finally, I planted some **Red Poppies** in my garden a

few years ago and have never had to replant them. Each year since, I have an abundant crop that comes up on its own. I'm pretty sure these are the same variety that my wife and I saw so abundantly on our trip to Italy last month.

This topic is a little embarrassing since I seem to have encouraged quite a number of invasive plants in my career. The one I most regret at the moment is **Mexican Evening Primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*)**. A couple of the pretty pink flowers appeared in one corner the garden during the first summer we owned this house, and I was so pleased that something was thriving in the garden that I encouraged them. Eight years later they are appearing in all parts of the garden and I'm pulling them out by the handful.

The other mistake I'll admit was the purchase of an **Artemisia** (the variety of which I seem to have purged from my memory and notebooks) which would brighten a shady spot in the back yard. The plant did not create the silvery mound I'd envisioned, but spread quickly by runners--sending individual leaves up here and there. I've spent years out pulling yards of runners, and still the odd silvery leaf will appear where I least expect it.

***Phalaris arundinacea picta*--Ribbon Grass**--Forms a 2- to 3-ft.-high clump that spreads aggressively by underground runners. Leaves are deep green with longitudinal white stripes, turn buff colored in autumn.

***Artemisia vulgaris* 'Oriental Limelight'**--Deciduous perennial; upright mounding growth to 3 feet high and wide. Attractive variegated leaves: green, yellow and gold. Spreads by rhizomes and can be invasive.

Well, 2 come to mind - vines that I loved until I had to pull them out & it wasn't easy! **Jasmine** (I love the smell of the flower) but it almost took over my yard & my angry neighbor's. Just too invasive unless you keep them in a pot away from anything it can root in. The other is the evergreen **Honeysuckle**, which I still have in pots in controlled spaces - just too fast growing & invasive! I have a deciduous variety - can't remember the name - pretty tangerine colored flowers - and it is not nearly so invasive & was beautiful this year! Oh, same for **Potato Vine**!

Yes, I regret planting **Violets**. They were so pretty...at first...but now have taken over where I planted them! Round-up helped, but they came back looking rather yellow.

Another one is some kind of small **wild onion** type bulb. I don't know the name. It came from a small bag of bulbs for a school fundraiser about ten years ago--an investment that keeps on giving. Blooms about now with white clusters of flowers. Rather nice at first, but they multiple and now I can't get rid of them! I tried Round-up on green leaves early spring, but it didn't work very well. Help!

Many, many. The wages of the sin of experimentation. **Houttuynia cordata, Vinca minor, Indian Strawberry (*Duchesnea indica*)** to name the most recent. I plant other invasive species in places where they will survive, but not thrive. That way they can sometimes be controlled.

Baby's Tears. Forget-Me-Not. Mexican Evening Primrose--it has a pink, poppy-like flower. **Vinca minor**. Non-clumping **Ornamental Oxalis**. We dig this out several times a year but it keeps coming back.

Our yard boasts several plants and trees that feel the need to propagate in places preferred only by them. The most invasive would be the **Honeysuckle**. Thirty years ago we planted two 1 gallon vines to soften the pool equipment enclosure. They outperformed every plant in the garden. Thankfully, they're evergreen and their white and yellow trumpet shaped flowers provide a heavenly scent throughout the yard. The vines climb the nearby trees, wrapping around the limbs like a python. They become leather-like as they age, cutting into the bark if left too long. Because of their sweet scent, the birds have a fond attraction. They're great little planters and have deposited seeds along most the fences and any vertically appealing location. This invasive little sucker keeps my husband busy improving his pruning skills.

Gazanias are another heartily invasive plant, but they've been keeping to the flowerbeds, seldom in the right location. If a gazania were an artist, it's specialty would be abstract.

I have one plant that I would never encourage anyone to plant--**Mexican Primrose**. It has wonderful pink flowers, stands about knee high, and is beautiful now at this time of year. The downfall is that it spreads horribly. I only got rid of it by covering it with several layers of newspapers (7-10) and then a very thick layer (4-5 inches) of mulch. It has spread onto other areas and I am not trying to get it out of the other areas.

Some of the worst offenders for me:

Vines: Perennial **Morning Glory 'Blue Dawn Flower' (*Ipomoea indica*)**, not the annual morning glory grown from seeds which I can control. This one grows from underground runners.

Groundcovers: **Giant Ajuga (*Ajuga reptans*)**, **Lily Turf (*Liriope*)**, **Common Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)**, **Indian Strawberry (*Duchesnea indica*)**

Bulbs: **'Spring Starflower' (*Ipheion*)**

Morning Glory! It is one of my favorite plants but absolute my worst plant experience. Several years ago I planted a one gallon in the ground to grow on a trellis and before I knew it the plant was running the entire depth of my property as well as the depth and length of my neighbor's property. As hard as we tried to stay on top of it, it got the best of us every year. Fortunately my neighbor liked the plant and enjoyed it covering her fence.....I'm not sure how she felt about it

growing up into her redwoods. If she minded, she graciously never said. I've moved from that property, but I'm sure the Morning Glory lives on :)

I've been giving this some thought and although some of these plants are drought tolerant, I've planted them where they do get water 3 times a week and have become a nuisance. They were already established and then I planted roses around the bed and it's a job to pull them out. So, it's all my own fault!

Santa Barbara Daisy: *Erigeron karvinskianus*

Cranesbill: *Geranium incanum*, which came from the GOS years ago is a pest as it reseeds everywhere.

Yarrow, pink : *Achilles millefolium* hybrid, also from the GOS

Fern Leaf Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare crispum*) spreads vigorously by self-pegging or starting new roots wherever the foliage touches the soil. Tough plant, really tough roots. Took many digging days to eradicate it from the herb garden.

Lemon Balm sets a huge crop of seed that spreads everywhere in the garden. The only control is to cut back the flower heads constantly.

Alyssum and Queen Anne's Lace self-sow prolifically and the seeds sprout in nooks and crannies and remain viable on the soil surface for many seasons. I save a few Queen Anne's lace volunteers to serve as host plants for beneficial insects and try to pull them out before they set seed, but still must remove countless seedlings every spring.

While these plants may be perfect in someone else's landscape, they are on my 'never plant' and 'avoid at all costs' lists. I inherited some from gardener's equipment, birds and breezes and was gifted with others, which makes me wonder if the giver was friend or foe??

Inherited, not by choice: **Pink Knotweed-- *Polygonum capitatum*** It absolutely overran the flowerbeds of a former residence and was impossible to get rid of. Don't be fooled by the cute little patterned leaves and pink flowers.

African Calendula (Aka Cape Weed, Cape Daisy, Cape Marigold) *Arctotheca calendula*. This one will run and root at every joint into lawns, adjoining beds, you name it, it goes there. It can be daunting to remove completely.

Gifted: **Creeping Fig *Ficus pumila* (*F. repens*)** This one attaches securely in barnacle-like fashion to wood, masonry, and even metal, bushes, trees, anything it can wind onto or cling to. It grows in sun or shade and runs like crazy into your beds in tough long woody stems that are near impossible to get rid of. Nothing seems to harm it, which is why they plant it on freeway walls I presume.

Bear's Breeches *Acanthus mollis*. I wrote about this wicked plant on a garden forum back in 2005: "Extremely invasive unless you have lots of room to let it go. I was given one little piece w/root intact by a 'friend'?? We still laugh about it every time I mention the 'plant from ???'. You get the picture. It took me 2 years to get rid of it, as the slightest sliver of a stalk re-rooted and it was near my pool and wanted to dive in. We couldn't walk around the pool deck in its heyday. It might be beautiful in some settings, but in my yard in full sun, 100°+ summer temps, it was not welcome." I nearly had to sift the soil to get rid of it!

I do not know about Fresno, but when I lived in San Jose I visited the Santa Cruz mountains often. The people living there told me to NEVER plant **Scottish Broom**. I have never planted it, but I see it in the nurseries in Fresno. (Yellow blooms).

Yup I've got one for you. Someone gave me a cutting of **Artemisia or Common Wormwood** a few years ago. Thought it would be a nice addition for its texture and color so I put it in one of my flower beds. Within a year it had tripled in size and was crowding out the other plants. I decided to move it but when I discovered how it had sprawled and anchored itself with tough woody stems I pulled it out completely. Working with it really brought the scent out which I found not pleasant to say the least...smelled like medicine which I understand it was used for in years gone by. Never again!!!

Ivy, not sure what type, maybe English. In my house back east, I had it growing up the siding and one the window sills. The window sill was concrete and the grabbers ate it away. Also, **Mint**. I planted in a plastic pot hoping to contain it but---it split the pot and grew where it was not wanted. I have planted last year or year before **Italian Oregano**. I could now probably give it to all my neighbors. I put it in an area I grow herbs in, which had a block surround but it gets through and gets out

I also have a plant which is a ground cover which has blue flowers which is on the invasive list but it is not bad in my yard. It is where I want it and doesn't seem to move too fast. Can't remember the name though!

Have given this lots of thought & even though some can be considered invasive, I would still plant them in my yard with the possible exception of **Asparagus densiflorus 'Sprengeri'** This one I would give a lot more thought to before planting again even if it does work out well between the boulders as a filler.

Mexican Evening Primrose: A spreading perennial of pretty pink flowers, it reseeds itself, and becomes very invasive. It will pop up between other plants and is hard to control.

Vinca major & Vinca minor (Periwinkle) pretty purple flower, evergreen trailing vine rooting along the stems, to form a dense mass of groundcover. Have to control otherwise it becomes invasive.

Obedient Plant--*Physostegia virginiana* aka False Dragonhead, in the mint family, named 'obedient plant' because the individual flowers stay in place when moved. It is a perennial with spike flowers (snapdragon-like), colors come in white, pink and lavender, mine are lavender in color. This plant self seeds and spreads aggressively. The root system consist of a central taproot and rhizomes.

Thanks to the birds and neighbors for:

Clerodendrum bungei (C. foetidum) common name **Cashmere Bouquet**. Spread by suckers, pops up everywhere. Foliage smells nasty. Pretty pink flowers ironically are sweet smelling, also covered with ants with barnacle scale on branches.

Prunus caroliniana Carolina Cherry Laurel. To quote an anonymous contributor to DavesGarden.com; Nasty, Nasty, Nasty....Weed Tree!!! They will certainly TAKE OVER!!!! You'll be pulling little seedlings up until the end of time! The Robins & Cedar Waxwings just love the berries. Bless their little hearts.

Ligustrum lucidum - Glossy Privet & Ligustrum sinense - Chinese Privet The birds did it again.

Hedera spp.--Ivy This neighborly contribution is winning the war.

Vinca major 'Variegata'--Mea culpa. Still, easier to control than the ivy.

I made the mistake of throwing out a pack of wildflower seeds when I first moved into my present home 16 years ago. I'm still "blessed" with plants from that mix. *Forget-me-nots* are a love/hate plant. They are so cute with their little blue flower but the seeds stick to gardening gloves, clothes and most annoyingly dog's fur. They'll mat up a muzzle if the Airedales have had a good romp. **Coreopsis tinctoria** is a stunning June plant up to 5 feet tall with a yellow flower and a maroon center but it reseeds like crazy and comes up as thick as the hair on a dog's back. Within the last 5 years I planted the **Obedient Plant** and hate it. It has taken over the bed I planted it in and perpetuates by underground runners. The blooms are too insignificant and short-lived to justify their place in the garden. Grrrrr

Iris

The versatile iris comes in a variety of colors; I have everything from white to electric blue and soothing pink, in a variety of heights. For the most pop, plant a grouping of the same color for a strong visual impact.

Japanese iris (iris ensata) has such delicate purple and yellow flowers with a matching delicate fragrance

Siberian iris (I. sibirica) make good cut flowers, in vivid blue and purple

Bearded iris can bloom twice a year, in spring and fall for another round of a color kaleidoscope. My yard has seen nearly every color imaginable at one time or another.

Water iris (I. versicolor) are in a large goldfish pond...I enjoy the bright blue flowers above water, while the goldfish have fun swimming among the plants.

I will add one, even though it is not a new one -- **Maria Torena**, strong lavender standard and falls with dark purple flecks and and orange beard, a broken color iris.

'Alabama Bound', white (Fresno Iris Society)

'Good Night Irene', vibrant true blue (TOTH)

'Cor d' Or', bold yellow (Fresno Iris Society)

'Summer Olympics', soft yellow Remontant (TOTH)

I used to live in Salem, Oregon. So, I went to the Shriner's Iris Gardens every year. I have many favorites, **Stepping Out** (dark purple and white), **Jennifer Rebecca** (Rose-Pink), **Stormy** (light and dark blue) and many others! This year's theme should be, "So many iris, so little time." The early heat has really shortened the season. My favorites are whatever is blooming, but I do have some sentimental ones: **Fresno Folic** (an orange developed by John Weiler, my Plant Taxonomy professor), **Coyote** (bright yellow standards, dark purple striped falls), **Old Black Magic** (close to true black), **Samurai Warrior** (one of the older reds), **Batik** (White striped blue), **Pond Lily** (pink to lavender), and many whose names are lost or never were known. I also have several varieties of **Louisiana, Dutch and Siberian Iris**, which this year are cooking in the sun.

My favorite is **Iris germanica 'Hemstitched'**. It is a **German Bearded iris**. The iris is white and all of the edges are accented with a beautiful shade of purple. It grows 32-36" tall.

Yes I do love iris but I have no idea what my varieties are. I do like the deep purple, the apricot and the pink. My grandmother gave me some iris when I was a young lad and I pampered those varieties for years. Time and circumstance have caused them to disappear but I have purchased other varieties over the years and still love to grow them.

I like irises, especially reblooming irises. Tall bearded irises are my favorite. We have a very pretty reblooming tall bearded iris in the perennial garden, **'Summer Olympics'**. It's a pale yellow color. It blooms about 3x/yr. Another we have is **'English Cottage'**. It's white and has a luscious fragrance like orange blossoms.

I'm sure I put iris as a favorite but not because I had any of which I knew the name. I bought four this year at the Home Show from the Iris Society booth. Those have names and I liked the photos of them. I looked them up on the internet and found terms I don't know/understand, so I'll just give a general description. The italicized terms are new to me.

'Devonshire Cream' White w/ yellow beards, ruffled

'Coral Point' Coral-pink ruffled w/ orange-coral beards, ruffled

'Eagle Control' Style arms lobelia blue w/ fall of pale, almost white falls, ruffled

'Rare Quality' Style arms deep blue-purple with a splash of white in the middle to the base and white falls edged in the same blue, ruffled.

I like Iris because they are dependable in all soils and zones. They are easy to plant even on a hillside for erosion control-just peg them down with ground cover cloth pegs in the fall. There are so many colors, styles and heights that there must

be something for everyone. Personally I like orangey colors as well as purples that are on the blue side. The only downer is they don't last long enough to suit me. I am going to start looking into the rebloomers.

Japanese Maples

My favorite Japanese Maple is '**Bloodgood**'. In the spring its leaves come out brilliant red and it produces deep pink/red samaras or winged seeds, in the summer the leaves on mine turn green/bronze because of the amount of sun that they get, and then in they turn back to a deep red/burgundy in the fall. After the leaves fall, I rake them off the patio to back underneath the trees and enjoy the red carpet mulch until they decompose - which is usually fairly quickly.

I love Japanese Maples and they grow like crazy for me cuz I live in Wildwood Island where the soil is nice and acidic from all the oak leaves and the river depositing sediment for hundreds of years! I don't have any fancy ones, just '**Bloodgood**' and the plain green kind, but all turn colors in the fall and the '**Bloodgood**' are gorgeous red in the spring. I keep finding the little seedlings and if they have reached 5" or so, I pot them up. After they've grown to a couple of feet, I transplant them in the garden. I've got about 14 Maples at the moment, only 4 of which are '**Bloodgood**'. I have two **Hygawa** Japanese Maples - both seem to be happy in large whiskey barrel containers. Their finely cut leaves look delicate on arching branches and are subject to color change with the seasons. Moderate growers to fifteen feet, this variety makes a strong accent on deck, patio, or in the yard.

The Japanese Maple is the favorite in my garden because there are so many varieties they fit well in any location. The larger maples along the back edge of the yard provide umbrellas of shade. The smaller varieties with their unusual leaves or colorful branches, fit nicely in corners and say, "Look at me". The graceful branches provide interesting shapes during the winter months and the leaves change colors in fall, spring and summer.

I love Japanese Maples! Unfortunately the gardeners have removed most of my signs. I have 53 in my garden. Here are a few that I know for sure that I have in pots. I like the pots because I can move them if need be. They are so airy. I love to prune mine to see through. They are fun. I supposedly have the largest Japanese Maple in Old Fig in my garden. How great is that.

1. '**Baby Lace Dwarf**'
2. '**Butterfly Matsumurae variegated**'
3. '**Oregon Sunset**' Matsumurae
4. '**Tamuke yama**'- Dissectum- red
5. '**Tsuma ben**'-i Amoenum-green
6. '**Crimson Queen**'- Dissectum-red
7. '**Katsura**'-green
8. '**Peaches & Cream**'-Palmatum-variegated
9. '**Kiyohime Dwarf**'- green
10. '**Seiryu**'- Dissectum-green
11. '**Beni otake**'- Linearilobum-red

I love my Japanese Maple tree '**Bloodgood**' - I have two. Great red color!! I have really enjoyed them for about the last five years. They need partial shade in Fresno. You will enjoy their beautiful form. Easy to prune and slow growing. Such a beautiful tree. They are a wonderful focal point in any garden.

'Sango Kaku' or Coral Bark Japanese Maple is my favorite. I love the red branches in winter. This one grows taller and narrower, a lot like me!!!

Saw another Japanese Maple in a nursery yesterday that I liked called Acer palmatum '**Shaina**' that appeared to have two different colored leaves. Probably old growth versus new growth but pretty stunning non-the-less.

I have 8 Japanese maples in my garden. My favorites are '**Inaba shidare**' and '**Sango kaku**.' The '**Inaba shidare**' is in a pot on my patio. I have had it about seven years and it is still only about 3 feet tall. It is a split-leaf red maple with a lateral growth habit. I have seen one planted on a mound in my neighborhood and it has a lovely, lacy look that provides a nice texture in the garden. It does not do well in sun as it burns easily. I have had the '**Sango kaku**' (Coral-bark maple) 4-5 years and it has been planted in the ground since I got it. It has grown about 3 feet in the time I've had it. The bark does not stay coral in our heat, but it is still an attractive tree with light green foliage. It grows to a height of about 10 feet and seems to do well in the heat. It is planted on the north side of my house and gets quite a lot of sun. Its leaves burn less than the other, more protected varieties that I have.

My favorite Japanese Maple is the cultivar '**Fireglow**'. It is a relatively small tree --well-branched and upright in habit, eventually reaching about 15' in height. It makes an excellent container plant or a good garden tree. It is just the right size for my small lot. It is similar to the more popular cultivar '**Bloodgood**', but has a deeper, more intense red leaf color, that stays red throughout the growing season. I had to search for several years before I found a cultivar that would retain a rich red leaf color reliably. I was finally able to purchase '**Fireglow**' as a 2 1/2 foot tall tree at the San Francisco Garden Show in 2003. It is now 7 feet tall.

I have several Japanese Maples in my garden. My two favorites are the '**Coral Bark**' and the '**Bloodgood**' Japanese Maples. The two maples are close in vicinity and when they first leaf out in the spring the contrast of the two is incredible. The red leaves of the '**Bloodgood**' and the lime yellow of the '**Coral Bark**' maple. In the winter the color of the '**Coral Bark**' maple's bare stems and trunk is spectacular.

Yes, I love Japanese Maples and have several, planted in my landscape and some in pots. I bought most of mine for fall color, but unfortunately, it is very difficult to get the potted material to the fall color time, in any condition that allows them to color the way they are advertised. Mine have gotten so much leaf burn that very little color is visible. This year I am having better luck by adding 1/4 cup of vinegar to a three gallon bucket of water prior to watering them. This is supposed to neutralize the salts that cause the leaf burn. They still look pretty good - time will tell. I have one of the red barked varieties planted in my landscape and it reaches fall in pretty good shape - gets morning sun and afternoon shade. My potted varieties are '**Korean Gem**', '**Ever Autumn**' and '**Lionheart**' (a split leaf variety that is supposed to tolerate the valley heat - it is doing very well on my patio with filtered sun). I recently read that valley residents should purchase their Japanese Maples for spring color because of the difficulty of getting the trees to the fall period in good shape. Makes sense.

My favorite Japanese Maples in my garden are '**Bloodgood**' for its rich red color and '**Garnet**' which is a lace leaf, cascading green to red shrub to tree.

Lavenders

I have a form of English lavender called **Lavandula 'vera'**. It is popular in our area due to its full sun and low water needs as well as its wonderfully fragrant smell. The plants can grow to four feet high; however, they are easily cut back if you desire a more compact look. Leaves are gray and provide a nice background for the small (1/2") lavender flowers that bloom during our hottest months. No fertilizer necessary - just well draining, loose soil. Merely rubbing the foliage gives a nice fragrance!

Lavandula stoechas 'Silver Anouk' Love this lavender principally due to its white-grey foliage. Many grey foliage plants have a yellowish tinge, but **Silver Anouk** is very bright white-grey, a stand-out evergreen plant in my garden for year-round interest. The abundant purple flowers contrast beautifully with the foliage.

<http://nativeson.typepad.com/plants/2010/08/lavandula-stoechas-silver-anouk.html>

My favorite is **Lavandula stoechas 'Bella'** series. **Bella Rouge** is a great rebloomer with nice foliage year round and has compact, bushy growth.

There are so many different types that I like, but I'll name my top three:

Provence: for color, fragrance, and cooking

English: for stem length (It's perfect for making lavender wands!), and the fragrance lasts forever in potpourri

Pinatta: an unusual variety! I like it for its gray leaves and stems, and the flower itself. It is a perfect landscape lavender! I could go on, but I guess that I just like them all!

The two I have are the most common: **Lavandula angustifolia** (English Lavender) and **Lavandula dentata** (French Lavender).

I just like the **French lavender** for its culinary and medicinal qualities as well as aroma...and its color and texture

Spanish lavender for its beauty in color, texture and beautiful flower,

I've experimented with lavender cultivars in Fresno for almost 20 years, and find that the results vary by soil/neighborhood, planting technique, variety, drainage, and what seems to be random acts of the hostile universe. Best picks for my garden (Old Fig area, lots of hardpan, our soil has been dug out and heavily re-worked to improve drainage) at this time:

- **Dwarf Hidcote:** 12-15" including flowers, very dark purple buds, opening to dark purple flowers about 1" can get a bit leggy, benefits from gentle but regular shaping.
- **Goodwin Creek Grey:** tall, abundant plant with fine feathery foliage, the first to bloom in the spring, moderate scent, flowers an unusual intense smoky purple Prune vigorously.
- **White Grosso:** Pure white, long plump blooms on very long stems. Showy!
- **Blue Cushion:** Neat, very compact bush about 12" when mature, with bright blue blossoms on long stems. Stays small, needs only gentle trimming for shape
- **Fred Boutin:** Large hearty bush, very abundant bloomer, medium purple, long blooming season with generous fall re-bloom, good scent
- **Provence:** Good cooking lavender
- **Vera:** Best scent

I've killed off probably another 12-20 varieties over the years, trial and error. I found Jean Davis particularly sensitive to wet roots. Sometimes things will grow great in a pot but not in the ground and vice versa. Of course all dislike poorly draining soil and all love sun. I try 1-2 new varieties each year. Some live. Some don't!

It isn't very 'sexy' or unique, but **Lavandula angustifolia cv. vera** is a compact, hardy, tough as nails reliable performer with glorious deep lavender flowers that last and last. one of my favorites.

I have a huge bush of **English augustifolia**, which reliably produces masses of blooms all summer, as long as I don't water the nearby flowerbed too much!! I always like to have some English lavender in my gardens. It brings the bees in masses, makes everything smell so nice, and is a staple in my herb collection.

I also have a **Spanish lavender**, which has a most wonderful purple flower that looks wonderful next a blood-red floribunda rose. Of course, it doesn't smell quite as wonderful, but it can also be depended to re-appear each spring, which is in keeping with my lazy gardening habits! :)

I do have lavender in my garden and have some experience with three different varieties: **Spanish or Lavendula stoechas 'Otto Quast'**, **French or Lavendula dentata** and a small English variety or **Lavendula augustifolia 'Munstead'**. I love the show that the **Spanish stoechas** gives in the spring and the bees love it too but I find it gets woody after a couple of years, doesn't have as good a scent as the others and isn't great for drying. I've ended up pulling several out and haven't replaced them. The **French dentata** can get huge so it needs to be in a place that it can spread out. It will crowd out other plants, at least it did in my garden. It does have a wonderful fragrance and it has a much longer bloom time than stoechas. Since I have a small garden my favorite is the **little English Munstead**. It's not particularly showy but it is short and robust with a wonderful fragrance and is fantastic for drying. I have an old armoire upstairs that I hang bunches in to dry, smells so good. It doesn't get woody like stoechas so it has good staying power. I found the following information about Munstead on the website <http://everythinglavender.com/munsteadlavender.html>.

" 'Munstead' is named after Munstead Woods in Surrey, England which was the home of Gertrude Jeckyl, a famous English garden designer. Munstead is able to tolerate heat better than some of the other varieties as well." It's a good one for our central valley.

I grow several types of lavender, 3 huge plants of **'Provence'**, which smells great. Also have 3 **French lavenders**, including a cultivar and put in 3 **'Grosso'** last year, which is in bud. For closet sachets I love the **Provence**, a good typical fragrance. The French is pretty but the fragrance not as pleasing.

BUT, just saw a friend's **'Hidcote'** and **'Munstead'** which are both very deep blue and dwarf. So after this year's bloom, I'll replace the Provence with the smaller plants.

Miniature Roses

Scentsational-miniature roses grow to about 18"-20" and have a wonderful sweet fragrance. The flowers are mauve with a classic tea form. A vase full will beautify and perfume a room.

Dancing Flame is a prolific bloomer. The flowers are also of a tea form, have deep pink to crimson edging with varying color intensities of yellow and white. The blooms are surrounded by dark green glossy foliage. No fragrance here, but the color combination is striking, making it a lovely bouquet. Growth is 16"-24" and the plant is disease resistant

I like **Little Artist**. It has deep red, pointed petals, a circle of white in the center, and yellow stamens. I do not notice a fragrance. Unlike other miniatures I've had, it doesn't sprawl or get huge. It stays as a nice little bush. I saw this at a home on the Spring Garden Tour many years ago, and fell in love with it

Bee's Knees yellow blend, **Jean Kenneally** apricot, **Child's Play** pink blend, **Cupcake** pink blend, **Magic Carousel** red blend, **Minnie Pearl** pink blend, **Grace Seward White** 5 petals. They are fun to plant at the base of tree roses and that way I can plant more. Love Roses

For a white miniature rose I really love **Gourmet Popcorn**. It blooms all summer long, lots of blooms and does not seem to ever have a problem with powdery mildew, even though some of them are in the shade. Because they are in clusters they really do look like a handful of popped corn

My absolute favorite miniature rose is the **Popcorn** rose. Tiny, white, continuous, single blooms and it is a great addition to any garden. My other favorite is **Sun Sprinkles**, a very deep yellow, double bloom, somewhat fragrant. Its deep yellow is very striking and bold

Ralph Moore's roses, all purchased at Sequoia Nursery over the years:

Magic Carousel is my favorite hands down...looks like a miniature *Handel* with tiny creamy buds with petals edged in rosy red. Prolific bloomer, healthy vigorous bush reaching 3'. Makes great tiny bouquets with small lavender

Rose Gilardi--- miniature moss, red/pink striped

Stars and Stripes--- red/white striped

Rise and Shine --- butter yellow, vigorous bloomer'

Thanks to Sue --- apricot

I moved to Fresno from Berkeley in 1991. When I did, I gave away my large collection of potted miniature roses as I was told by gardeners in Berkeley that they would not do well in the Central Valley. I gave them all to my dentist, who was a mini rose fancier and who just might have had an ulterior motive. Of course, soon after I moved here I learned that Ralph Moore's nursery was a few miles away! That was when I decided to apply to become a Master Gardener, because there was just too much I did NOT know about gardening in the valley!

I made several trips down to Sequoia Nursery and visited with Mr. Moore before his death. Mr. Miniature himself!

I have quite a few miniatures but my favorite is the **Hoot N Holler!** This is a white and red blend - very vigorous and always in bloom!

I love **Rainbow's End**, which starts out yellow, turns to orange and ends up red.

Magic Carousel is a beauty: white with red tips

Moonlight Garden Plants

Gardenias are one of my favorite plants; the creamy white flowers are eye-catching in the moonlight, the fragrance delightful.

Other good choices are **Climbing White Roses**, **White Jasmine**, **Moonflowers** *Ipomoea alba*, and the **Night – blooming Daylily**, *Hemerocallis lilioasphodelus*

Plants with variegated foliage, like **Euonymus or Hosta** will stand out as will those with silver foliage like **Lamb's Ear or Artemisia**.

A soft evening breeze blowing through **ornamental grasses, pine trees** or even a wind chime can add interest.

For those nights the moon is hiding, sparsely placed decorative solar lighting can be used to highlight flowers and foliage. I have a **Night Jessamine (Cestrum nocturnum)** by the front door. On the rare occasions when the days are warm enough but not too hot, it blooms at night and has the most heavenly fragrance. I'm going to try propagating some in pots so I can move them around under open windows.

Some standards that work in Fresno:

Achillea 'Moonshine'. Alyssum. Rose

And plants that work well here that are night fragrant:

Brugmansia. Gardenia. Nicotiana.

These are two of my favorites;

Curry Plant--Helichrysum italicum

Grayish-white leaves that reflect light. Produces small yellow flowers. When brushed against it gives off a fragrance of curry powder. Drought tolerant. Not generally thought to be used in the kitchen, but it has a mild taste that can be used as a garnish or a compliment to eggs, fish, or yogurt.

White Sage--Salvia apiana Silvery gray leaves with lavender-tinged white flowers. It reflects moonlight and garden lights. Drought tolerant. Attracts bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies.

Here are some plants that come to mind to include in a Moongarden:

Evening fragrance:

Moonflower Vine *Ipomoea alba*

Woodland Tobacco *Nicotiana sylvestris*

Flowering Tobacco *Nicotiana alata*

Angels' Trumpet *Brugmansia*

Four O'clocks *Mirabilis jalapa*

Casa Blanca lilies

Silvery or Gray foliated plants

Dusty Miller *Artemisia*

Lamb's Ears

Brunnera macrophylla 'Jack Frost'

Happy gardening!

The plant I love is the **white Nicotianas** - the old fashioned one, not the hybrid. They have the most wonderful fragrance in the evening and night. My mother always had them by the back gate and when I would come home from evening horse rides that fragrance was always there and I continue that to this day.

Ornamental Grasses

It's hard to pick a favorite ornamental grass, as I like so many. But here are a few: **Muhlenbergia capillaris 'Pink Muhly'** is 3 feet tall, evergreen, very pretty in bloom with its airy masses of delicately branched flowers in soft pink clouds floating atop fine green glossy mounds of foliage. The flowers appear in late summer and last until winter. Very drought tolerant. Best in full sun.

Carex phyllocephala 'Sparkler' is also evergreen, about 12" high with fanlike whorls of foliage with dark green leaves that have broad white margins in striking longitudinal stripes -- looks great in containers on my front porch.

More common for me are the drought tolerant grasses that go dormant in winter, requiring they be cut back once a year. A very striking one is *Pennisetum 'Princess'* in a 4 foot high cascading mound, with nearly 2" wide leaves that become deep burgundy -- getting even darker as the summer progresses. This one doesn't bloom here unless the temperatures remain above freezing (there are smaller versions of this grass --

Pennisetum 'Molly' and *Pennisetum 'Caroline'*.) Another new *Pennisetum* is 'Fireworks' - a variegated version of Purple Fountain Grass that is a little over 2 feet tall with burgundy leaves variegated by hot pink.

Of course, my all time favorites are the many cultivars of *Miscanthus sinensis*. The cultivar 'Morning Light' is the most elegant of all *Miscanthus*, with fine-textured green leaves that have narrow margins of clear white, which is 4 feet tall topped with pink-bronze flowers in October. Relatively new cultivars of *Miscanthus* are 'Gold Bar' (4 feet high) and 'Gold Breeze' (6 feet high) -- both have numerous broad horizontal bars of gold on the bright green half-inch wide leaves and tall reddish blooms in the fall

Black mondo grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens'). I like the interesting color. It is small and no fuss - very easy to grow.

Two of my favorites are Red Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum') and Mexican Feather Grass (*Stipa tenuissima*) (the one that looks like Cousin Itt from the Adams Family).

I have the following in my garden.

Pennisetum setaceum 'Rubrum', Purple Fountain Grass

Cortaderia selloana, Pampas Grass

Pennisetum alopecuroides, 'Hameln', Fountain Grass

Muhlenbergia capillaris, Pink Muhly

Bouteloua gracilis, Blue Grama Grass

Bambusa multiplex 'Alphonse Karr', Bamboo

For my favorite it is a toss up between the Pink Muhly and the Bamboo. The Pink Muhly blooms a pink inflorescence in the fall. This has a feathery appearance and flows back and forth in the breeze. This is a nice contrast to the other grasses that have started to lose their green coloration and taking on their fall color that is tan or light brown. I have the bamboo in pots by my front door and in the ground in my back yard. It is perfect for my front pots for year round color and plant height. In the back they do a

wonderful job of screening out my neighbors but adding interest with the green and yellow striped culms. They are clumping, but still need to occasionally be thinned out

Here are some of my favorites and why:

1. Fountain Grass; *Pennisetum alopecuroides*, 'Hameln'. I like this variety because of its compact size and low water needs once established.

2. Blue Fescue; *Festuca glauca*, 'Elijah Blue'. This is a vibrant blue gray variety that is compact, keeps its mounded form and is slow to spread.

3. Gulf Coast Muhly Grass; *Muhlenbergia lindheimeri*. Another low water variety once established. The small plants fit well in a compact garden without taking up too much space, and look great when planted in multiples.

4. Fiber Optics Plant, *Isolepis cernua*. I think this is a fun plant with a unique appearance, great in ultra modern settings, or as a feature in sleek containers.

I have about 9 varieties of ornamental grass at the moment, of all types. They are so low maintenance (for the most part) and fill so many roles in the landscape, you can't help liking them all!

I like California Fescue (*Festuca californica*) for its native characteristics- low water, easy care - it can be used alone or massed for a groundcover. It is a cool-season (fall-spring) bunch grass. The airy flowers are whimsical-looking.

Deer Grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*) is a warm weather drought tolerant grass that can grow to 4'. It can make a good weed suppressant if massed and is a good beneficial insect plant.

My favorite is *Muhlenbergia rubra* (Pink Mule Grass). It grows 2-3 ft high, forms a nice clump, has a beautiful pink bloom in the fall that looks even better if you plant it where either the morning or the afternoon sun can shine through it. Looks nice with dew or frost on it after the color has faded. It does not seed itself or spread by rhizomes (YEAH). Does better with adequate water but survives drought. Only attention it needs is a hair cut in late winter.

Second favorite is Blue fescue. Nice little mounds of blue grey, easy to grow and divide. Has straw colored bloom in summer. I don't especially like it so I cut it off but that is a personal taste.

My favorite would be Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*).

Here are some of my favorites:

Nassella (Needle Grass), *Pennisetum* (Fountain Grass), *Phalaris arundinacea picta* (Ribbon Grass), *Stipa* (Feather Grass), and I love *Isolepis cernua* (*Scripus cernus*) (Fiber Optics Plant),

My favorites are *Carex testacea* (Orange Sedge), *Panicum virgatum* 'Cloud Nine' (Switch Grass), *Carex buechanani* (Leather Leaf Sedge), and *Chasmanthium latifolium* (Sea Oats).-

I enjoy Mexican Feather Grass, *Stipa tenuissima*, in my garden. It's cute, feathery and a good filler. It has self-seeded into cracks in some rocks and I appreciate the natural look. Black Mondo Grass, *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens', adds a unique color to the landscape.

Perennials

I love ***Alstroemeria***! Dwarf and old-fashion tall forms. Easy to grow, long bloom season, 2 times a year. Flowers last 2 weeks as cut flowers. For a low growing, long flowering, easy to grow, border or color spot, try ***Ruellia brittoniana*** 'Katie'. Needs sun and regular water, has lavender blue flowers on 10 to 12 inch high bushy clump. Common name is ***Mexican petunia***. Tight clump, not lanky and floppy like its larger cousin. Grown locally by Belmont nursery but a "sleeper" in the nursery industry and just not well known.

I absolutely love ***Columbines***. The unique shapes that combine to create the flowers are amazing, as are the beautiful colors. I love the lacy-looking foliage. It looks a lot like maidenhair fern. I like that they last on the plant for a good, long

period of time before blossoms die. They are very easy to grow with little maintenance. Just clip the spent stalks after they are finished for a more tidy look.

For variety of color and easy care, I like ***Alstroemerias*, *Chrysanthemums* and *Geraniums***. They do well in a variety of situations, be it potted or in the ground and tolerate our weather conditions well. *Alstroemerias* make a long lasting cut flower.

***Plecostachys serpyllifolia* 'Silver Mist'**- Mound-forming to trailing, grown for silvery to grey-green foliage. Evergreen. 2 feet tall. Full Sun. Drought tolerant.

***Sedum rupestre* 'Angelina'** - Quick-growing groundcover with golden, needle-like leaves that turn orange in fall. 4 inches tall. Evergreen. Full sun. Drought tolerant.

***Loropetalum c.* 'Ever Red'** - A compact variety featuring deep, vivid red blooms. Dark burgundy foliage retains its color throughout summer. Blooms in late winter to early spring. To 6 feet high and wide. Evergreen. Full sun. Medium water.

***Buxus sempervivens*:**

'**Green Tower**' - Narrow upright form of boxwood creates a "tower" shape with little to no pruning. 9 feet tall to 2 feet wide.

'**Green Velvet**' - Rounded shape with little to no pruning. 3 feet tall and wide.

'**Green Mountain**' - Forms a dense cone shape with little to no pruning. 5 feet tall and 3 feet wide.

'**Green**' series do not brown out in winter. Evergreen. Sun to part shade. Moderate water.

***Euonymus fortunei* 'Emerald Gaiety'** - Densely branched, semi-erect shrub featuring rounded glossy deep emerald green leaves with creamy white margins. Leaf margins acquire red tones as winter approaches. If given support, 'Emerald Gaiety' can be trained to climb. 3 to 5 feet tall. May root where branches touch ground. Some protection from full sun appreciated. Evergreen. Medium water.

My favorite perennials are the ornamental grasses, which require extremely low maintenance and are mostly drought tolerant. On my front porch I have ***Carex phyllocephala* 'Sparkler'**. It is evergreen, grows only 12" high in whorls of green and white variegation with striking longitudinal stripes. But more common for me than *Carexes*, are my drought tolerant grasses that go dormant in winter, requiring their only maintenance once a year in February or March when I cut them back to 4 or 5 inches in height.

I have several ***Miscanthus sinensis*** cultivars – ***M. sinensis* 'Morning Light'** is a 4 foot high fine-textured upright variegated *Miscanthus* that blooms in October. The cultivar '**Arabesque**' is a 5 foot high, 3 foot wide clump of grass whose blooms in late summer dance in the wind. Two recent introductions are the cultivars '**Gold Bar**' (4 feet high) and '**Gold Breeze**' (6 feet high) – they are both upright growers with numerous broad horizontal bands of gold on bright green half-inch wide leaves, and reddish blooms in the fall.

***Calamogrostris brachytricha* 'Korean Feather Reed Grass'** (or '**Achy Breaky Grass**') is a dark green relaxed grass that grows 3 feet all with stately plumes of almost white flowers, that bloom from September until frost arrives.

Two recent ***Pennisetum*** introductions are outstanding. ***Pennisetum* 'Fireworks'** grows a little over 2 feet tall and has leaves that are variegated - burgundy with hot pink edges. But my really spectacular one is ***Pennisetum* 'Prince'** that grows up to 5 feet high and 4 feet wide, with cascading foliage whose blades are nearly 2 inches wide. The foliage is a very **deep burgundy** color that is very eye catching!!

Jupiter's Beard forms a bushy clump to three feet high and wide and blooms throughout the summer and into fall. Tolerates most growing conditions but damp shade. Self-seeding can be a problem if space is limited.

One of my favorites that just keeps on growing for me is ***Campanula poscharskyana* 'Blue Waterfall'**. This is classified as a biennial, but I have had it growing in a container for at least 6 or 7 years. It has lovely long sprigs of small purple flowers (why I was drawn to it at first) and cascades nicely from containers or out of rocks or walls. You see it in many container groupings on the coast, but it does well here with adequate water. Showtime is in the spring, nice greenery the rest of the year.

My favorite perennial is the ***Columbine***. It grows all over my garden in afternoon shade. The soft attractive leaves grow year round for some varieties and die back until spring for other varieties. The blooms come in a variety of colors. I especially like a maroon and yellow one. The '**Swallowtail**' is an evergreen plant with yellow bloom with extra long tails on flower stems up to 3 feet tall. The '**Nora Barlow**' has a compact double flower likened to a tiny dahlia. They all press well and hold their colors after being pressed.

I also like ***Gaura***, a perennial that grows well in the valley. It sends out 3 foot flower stems that have white to pink to dark pink flowers that blow in the wind.

Heuchera or ***Coral Bells*** are a small evergreen plant with leaves of an interesting shape in a variety of colors from burgundy to green to peach and flower spikes of white to pink to coral bell shaped flowers.

Scabiosa columbaria or Pincushion Flower grows on an evergreen plant with lavender blue or pink blossoms on 10 " stems that bloom summer through fall.

The ***Daylily (Hemerocallis)*** is my favorite perennial - what's not to love about this plant. Coming in a gazillion colors, shades and textures; it's the Heinz 57 of perennials! It fits into just about any landscape style and loves the sizzling heat of the Central Valley summer. What a combination of beauty and strength. Planted en masse, they're absolutely fabulous!

Iris iridacene bearded 'Summer Olympics' , a remontant (rebloomer) blooms winter and again in spring, true yellow, with a splash of white in the center of the falls. from GOS.

'Good Night Irene', bright blue. from Iris Society.

'Cor d' Or', vibrant yellow. from Iris Society.

'Alabama Bound', stark white. from Iris Society.

Iris, Siberian Iris, hybrids I. sibirica and I. sanguinea. Slender 4 foot stems in a clump, bearing 2-5 blossoms with upright standards and flaring falls. White, shades of blues and purples, wine, pink and light yellow. In a large grouping they look like a Van Gogh painting.

My most favorite perennial is the **Autumn Sage**. It is so fragrant and the dainty blooms look like little faces smiling up at you! I also put a sprig or 2 in closets to keep bugs away. And a good idea is to add a few slips on a gift to make it look pretty as well as smell wonderful!

Dianthus caryophyllus or Wild Carnation -and various cultivars- are well-suited to this area, smell delightful, and make wonderful cut flowers. They can be propagated by cuttings and come in a wide range of colors and heights. Provide well-drained soil, avoid strong winds, and keep an eye out for caterpillars. Flowers appear in late spring and summer.

Dianthus, Delphinium, Scabiosa, Phlox, Iberis, Violas, and Salvias are my favorites that I can think of off the top of my head.

Purple African Daisies when they first bloom in the spring.

My problem is that, when shopping, I always pick out the color I am wearing. So my favorite perennials **today** are:

Gazania: bright, tough, and beautiful colors. **Primrose:** the most saturated colors in the plant kingdom. **Fibrous begonia:** sun or shade, tough, great color, easy to propagate. I could go on. They're all my children, and I'll have some different favorites this summer.

I love **Jupiter's Beard**. It must like my yard because it blooms and blooms and blooms for about 5 months.

I like **Chrysanthemum pacificum - Gold and Silver Chrysanthemum, Chrysanthemum hosmariense, Salvia leucantha - Mexican Sage, and Hesperaloe parviflora - Red Yucca.** They are all drought tolerant.

Dianella revoluta 'Baby Bliss' (Flax Lily) – Attractive clump forming evergreen perennial that spreads slowly by rhizomes. Blue-green foliage 18" high, pale violet blooms followed by green berries. Some protection from full sun. Regular water but can be drought resistant after established.

Coprosma hybrid 'Rainbow Surprise' – Colorful evergreen foliage plant, growing 4 – 5 feet tall and wide. Small shiny leaves variegated with cream and pink, red in cold weather. Some protection from full sun. Regular to low water once established.

Westringia fruticosa 'Smokey' (Coast Rosemary) – Attractive dwarf evergreen shrub to 3 to 4 feet tall and wide. Upright growth habit, small greyish-white edged variegated leaves with white flowers. Full sun and low water once established.

My **new** favorite perennials are **Lantana New Gold** (12" H x 3"W) and purple **Butterfly Bush, 'Flutterby'** (14"H x 3"W).

They are some of the new varieties of dwarf, drought tolerant plants for smaller gardens and sustainable landscape practices. They attract birds, butterflies, bees, and beneficial insects. Both have a long bloom season with little care once established. I also like the new **Baby Pete Lily Of The Nile** (6-8" H x 12" W).

Lisianthus

I love my little **Violets & Primroses**. I like them because both are signs that spring is breaking through the winter.

Stachys byzantina - Lamb's Ears. I have it planted here and there and find it really brightens up some dark areas and thrives in about any location. I love the furry leaves plus there always plenty to share. Another perennial in my yard that I enjoy is **Salvia greggii - Autumn Sage.** Just planted several of these last spring. It is fairly drought tolerant and low care. I selected this for the front yard as I prefer working in the back area. It needed very little attention after planting until it was time to prune it. Stayed pretty all summer and into the fall. I planted them fairly close and may attempt to work it into a hedge this year.

My favorites are many, but I have a **Calla Lily** that is rust in color and has colorful leaves. I can't find the name, and the tag just says calla lily. Some of the blooms are deep gold. It is special. Hope it made it through the winter.

Looking at my garden book, I find that most of my very favorites are annuals. However, I really enjoy all kinds of **Dahlias**. I tend to go with the darker, deep colors of reds, maroons and purples. They make wonderful cut flowers. A road trip to the Mendocino Botanical Gardens staffed by MG's will delight all gardeners, where there is an amazing garden full of Dahlias and other wonderful plant material. **Euphorbia 'Bonfire' -Cushion Spurge.** 10" tall, 18" wide, green spring foliage, turning to rich red maroon red with chartreuse-gold flowers. **Euphorbias** tend to do well in our backyard garden. I don't know if you have ever been to Carlsbad, CA to the Armstrong Nursery? We were there in the spring of 2010 when the **Ranunculus** were in bloom behind the Armstrong Nursery. It is amazing, acres of beautiful **Ranunculus**. You can walk the area or take the tractor drawn wagon ride. I don't have a lot of **Ranunculus**, but do have what is called **'Jumbo Tecolate Ranunculus Picotee Mix'** planted in the garden, a mix of yellow, orange and red that I purchased in Carlsbad at Armstrong.

One of my favorite perennials is **'Dancing Flame' Salvia**. This spectacular variegated **Salvia** with scarlet flowers mesmerizes like a fire dancing at night. This South American native is treated as a perennial in zone 8 and higher and as an annual elsewhere. Mine do excellent as perennials. These were shown in the California Pack Trials in 2007. The leaves are brilliant and variegated with lemon-lime and dark green. The flowers are intensely scarlet and a delight to the hummingbird. Ideal sites are morning sun and afternoon shade. They are not fussy plants. Once it has significant frost

damage in the fall, prune to ground level and add a layer of mulch for winter protection. I look for this variety of salvia in the garden centers every summer to no avail. I am still mail ordering. Let me know if anyone finds one in a nursery. I have my neighbors growing this plant in their gardens.

I also plant the **Germander Sage** for the grayish foliage and bluish flowers. This is a very hardy plant and will bloom most of the winter. The different foliage color makes for interest planted with other plants. I have become interested in many varieties of the sages and salvias and by process of elimination find the varieties that grow best in my garden. Combined with seasonal annuals they make for a colorful display without much care.

One of my favorites is **Achillea 'Moonshine'**. It has gray green divided leaves and yellow flower heads for a long time from spring to summer. Grows 1-2 ft high and behaves itself better than the millefoliums. It is a Mediterranean native, loves sun and is drought tolerant. It can be propagated by cutting off crowns that appear at the end of shot stems and sticking them in the ground in the late summer or fall. Need to be divided every couple of years to get rid of old woody growth and to keep plants neat. It gradually gets biggest but does not spread underground like millefolium.

A favorite perennial of mine is the **Forget-Me-Not (Myosotis)**. A simple, small perennial that makes an early spring appearance. Tiny, blue flowers with a white, yellow or pink eye grow easily, self-seed and are often used as a ground cover. Leaves are oblong, shiny and bright green. Partial shade and regular water are required.

A definite favorite of mine is **Argyranthemum frutescens 'Supa3047'** with common name **'Lemon Sugar Marguerite'**. I planted some in my front yard in April of 2005 and they are still doing well. Mine flowers most of the winter when most everything is leafless and drab. I'm attaching a photo that I took today showing the beautiful yellow flowers against bright green foliage. Very low maintenance, full sun & seems to tolerate lower temps.

I've found through my love of **Nandina domestica** that people either love *Nandina* or hate it. Personally, I find it's a really versatile plant, a great foundation plant, shows up well against a wall or to highlight a window, makes a great hedge, is drought tolerant and does well even when over-watered. Did I mention that it likes either sun or shade? The tall more traditional *Nandina's* run 5-6 feet tall, and spread easily. **'Plum Passion'** is a Monrovia exclusive and full of leaf color, especially in the fall winter. The shorter versions are **'Firepower'** with a wider leaf, need little attention, and I use **'Sienna Sunrise'** for the hedge across my front yard. There are others out there and I've used most if not all, but for me, I appreciate the anchoring aspect of an evergreen perennial that is full of leaf color and gives year round structure and beauty with a minimal amount of care.

I have two favorites - a sun loving perennial and a shade-preferring perennial. My sun lover is **Liatris**. It adds height and interest but not density to any garden. My shade choice is **Helleborus**. Mine are blooming now and will keep going for several months. There are some new varieties that I am going to have to find.

Small Trees

I have some multi-trunked **Crabapple trees** that are really pretty. Lovely branching, beautiful spring flowers in a coral pink color, fruit that birds enjoy & fall foliage color. They are spectacular for a small tree. We've had no pest problems with them yet have never sprayed anything on them. They do require some pruning each spring because of those sprouts (are they called water sprouts?).

I also love my circle of **white Crape Myrtles** around the fire pit. When Jeff was a teen the kids actually caught one on fire & it came back great. Pretty trees even though they're so common & I like the fact they take less water and also that they bloom in the summer while most flowering trees are spring blooming.

Of course my all time favorite is the **Redbuds**. We've tried growing the **'Forest Pansy'** but didn't have any luck with them. Their color is so pretty. The ones we do have are **'Oklahoma'**.

One of my favorite small trees is the **Osmanthus fragrans or Sweet Olive**. It is versatile - can be trained as a hedge, screen, small tree, espalier, or container plant - but what I really like are the small flower clusters that have a strong citrus/apricot smell. It's wonderful! The Sweet Olive does not need much water, once established, and likes partial shade or full sun as it matures. This evergreen grows to ten feet or more.

Juniperus scopulorum 'Skyrocket'. Skyrocket Juniper provides a perfect "exclamation point" for your landscape design. This juniper will grow quickly to 15 - 20 feet tall, and at maturity the base is only 3 feet wide. This small evergreen tree is a gorgeous dusty blue-green color throughout all seasons, drought resistant, maintenance-free, and nearly pest-free.

Three of my favorite small trees:

Cercis occidentalis (Western Redbud) - 10-18'H x 15'W, a low water user, lovely heart shaped leaves and striking magenta blossoms in spring. Usually multi-trunked.

Chionanthus retusus (Chinese Fringe Tree) - 20'H x 25'W, umbrella-like canopy, dramatic white fringe flower clusters in late spring

Arbutus unedo 'Compacta' (Strawberry Tree) - 10'H, a low water user, interesting bark, attractive urn-shaped flowers and round yellow, orange and red fruit, in different stages of ripeness are often present on the tree at the same time.

Toyon, Heteromeles arbutifolia Toyon typically grows from 2-5 m (rarely up 10 m in shaded conditions) and has a rounded to irregular top. Its leaves are evergreen, alternate, sharply toothed, have short petioles, and are 5-10 cm in length and 2-4 cm wide. In the early summer it produces small white flowers 6-10 mm diameter, in dense terminal corymbs. The five petals are rounded. The fruit is a small pome, 5-10 mm across, bright red and berry-like, produced in large quantities, maturing in the fall and persisting well into the winter. It is also known by the common names **Christmas**

berry and **California holly**. Toyon can be grown in domestic gardens in well-drained soil, and is cultivated as an ornamental plant. It can survive temperatures as low as -12°C . The bush is handsome all year round and the bright red berries in winter are showy (which birds often eat voraciously). They are visited by butterflies, and have a mild, hawthorn-like scent. The fruit are consumed by birds, including mockingbirds, American robins, and cedar waxwings. Mammals including coyote and bear also eat and disperse the berries.

Note: above text copied from Wikipedia

One of my favorite small trees is the **Rose of Sharon**....allows for nice filtered light and flowers all summer long.

I have 5 that John Pape writes about in his book *Understanding Trees*, and I've grown all but the Chaste tree. Depending on your soil, exposure, etc. these keep to 20-25 ft. as a rule. However, my favorite of these trees, the Crape Myrtle, grows 30 ft. for me, but so do most plants out here near the river cuz the soil is so rich and slightly acidic. Here goes:

1. **Crape Myrtle**: I have 3 in my front garden and 5 in back. I love the seasons with this tree. In spring, light and lacy leaves, summer, gorgeous show of colorful pendanty clusters in red, coral, pink, lavender and white. They're wonderful when it's boiling hot and nothing else is quite as perky. Fall color in leaves, and winter branches with beautiful colored bark. I prune them to achieve the branchy, multi-trunked look I love in a garden. In summer especially when it's loaded with blossoms, I just whack away. They always come out looking gorgeous.

2. **Smoke tree**: My second favorite. I started out with one in a pot for 2 years, then planted it in a dark corner just because I didn't have anything else to set off the house. It rewarded my neglect by growing beautiful leaves and the smoke blossoms in soft pastel against the reddish bronze leaves. It's a wonderful small tree. You could keep it as a bush as well. Responds well to pruning to shape.

3. **Strawberry tree**: Evergreen. 25 - 40 ft. according to Pape, again depending on conditions. You could also prune it shorter. I like to train it multi-trunked. Beautiful bark, white flowers, fruit drops so plant in ground cover.

4. **Crabapple**: Pape likes *Prairie Fire*. 15-20 ft. Beautiful color all year, changing with seasons. Drawback: Messy, but looks good in groundcover.

5. **Chaste tree**: I haven't grown one, but Pape says it's a nice small tree that needs early pruning to shape. 15-20 ft. Root system sucks up water, he says, but the foliage resembles Jap. Maple, and I've seen a gorgeous multi-trunked one in a nursery in a planter box.

Oklahoma Redbud. Fabulous display of deep fuchsia flowers in spring followed by shiny green leaves all summer. grows slowly, gets along on little to moderate water, and red-humped caterpillars don't like it very much.

My favorite tree is the **Ginkgo biloba**. I planted three of them about 30 years ago so mine are a good size now. I love the shape of the leaf and the beautiful yellow color in the fall. Ginkgos are one of the oldest deciduous trees. Was world wide but now only native to China. When I was in Beijing I asked our guide about ginkgo trees because I had read that ginkgos were the stated tree of that city. He had no clue of what I was talking about so when I saw one I asked him about it. He did not know the name Ginkgo. I trees that I saw there were over two stories high. Beautiful shaped trees little pest or disease problems. Buy only the males because the female have messy smelly fruit. The fall yellow leaves make great pressed leaf decorations.

My favorite small tree is the **Knife Acacia *Acacia cultriformis***. This native of Australia is evergreen, drought tolerant (in well-drained soil), grows slowly to about 12 feet, with about a 12 foot spread. It has a tendency to be multi-trunked and vase-shaped, but can be judiciously pruned to a standard shape. It thrives in full sun, but tolerates partial shade. The species name *cultriformis* means knife-like, and refers to one inch long, grayish-green triangular leaves that look like little paring knife blades. These leaves tightly hug the drooping grey branches in precise rows. The tree blooms spectacularly and gloriously in spring (usually in March) with bright yellow-gold flower clusters that attract birds. Unfortunately, I no longer have a Knife Acacia tree, as I had to leave mine behind when I sold my previous home 9 years ago. But you can view several specimens of Knife Acacia in the median island on Ashlan just east of Blackstone Avenue.

A favorite of mine is the **Forest Pansy Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)**. It grows best in zones 5-8 and is a mature tree at 20-30 ft. I especially like the heart-shaped purple leaf. It moves gracefully in a slight wind.

This is my list of favorites but they serve in different ways and under 25'.

Laurus nobilis, Sweet Bay, evergreen, messy leaves for patio area, but beautiful compact tree, more drought tolerant, can be shaped as in topiary, can be multitrunked or standard.

Vitex agnus-castus, Chaste Tree, very open tree with pruning and beautiful blooms in the spring and lesser amount through the summer, drought tolerant, deciduous, leaf drop in winter and small seeds.

Pittosporum tobira, Tobira, great multitrunked evergreen, in spring you have leaf drop, very fragrant creamy white flowers in spring, scale problems and seed drop, don't think it is good for patio area, great shape with pruning, bees.

Chamaerops humilis, Mediterranean Palm, if you want a "Florida" feel this is great, however a slow grower, not messy, very drought tolerant.

Feijoa, Pineapple Guava, a great exotic looking tree/bush, gray foliage with very exotic blossoms, messy fruit, evergreen, a great backdrop tree.

Callistemon spp., Bottlebush, beautiful blooms, bees go with that and messy dropping of dead flowers so not good for patio or walkway, evergreen, hummers love it.
So what is my top favorite? Probably the *Vitex*.

My trees are more like patio trees i.e, **Mallow** and I have a **Mexican Redbud** but I have it container planted to keep it under 8ft. When I bought it they told me it would only get 6 ft. The first month it grew to over 8 ft.

My three favorite small trees are:

***Cotinus coggygia* 'Royal Purple' (Purple Smoke Tree)**-10'-15' H X15'W Multi-trunked tree with gorgeous round purple leaves with puffs of smoke spring into summer (8" blossoms).

***Lagerstroemia* (Crape Myrtle)** Size varies. This tree has summer blooms in a variety of colors from white to pink to purple to red. I love the smooth polished bark on the trunk as well.

***Vitex* (Chaste tree)** This multi-trunked tree is drought tolerant with wonderful purple bloom through the summer. Beware of round seeds on sidewalks or driveway in the fall. They are like ball bearings and can be dangerous.

I have lots of small trees, since I don't have a large yard. They include **Western Redbud** and **Desert Willow** in the native plant garden, both are about 20 years in the ground and provide color throughout the year. The ***Chilopsis linearis* (Desert Willow)** blooms all summer and needs no water. The ***Cercis occidentalis* (Redbud)** is multi trunked and is beautiful in the spring with magenta blossoms and has good fall color. I have several **Crape Myrtles** that bloom for months and they provide fall color. I have one evergreen small tree, the **Kumquat 'Meiwa'** that is blooming now, it is about 8 feet tall after 8 years. We enjoy the fruit for months. The other fruit trees are fig, persimmon and pomegranate, low water and great colorful fruit. I love the ***Arbutus 'Marina'*** which is a slow grower, it's about 10 ft. tall after 7 years, has beautiful peeling bark and is blooming again.

I like **Crape Myrtles**. I have several mature multi-trunk ones here in heavy clay soil and they survive just fine. Must be tough to live out here. They bloom in the summer and have many color choices. Sometimes the aphid population gets to be problem, but I wash them off with water spray and the trees thrive once again. In the winter the trees are decorative because of their interesting bark....sort of like natural sculptures after pruning.

Succulents

Succulents come in such a variety of colors, shapes and textures - there is something for everyone. They are relatively easy to care for: just watch out for frost and easy on winter watering!) and have a multitude of uses.

In hanging baskets I have **Sedums, Senecios and Ceropegia woodii (String of Hearts)**.

In containers live ***Adenium obesum* (Desert Rose), *Astrophytum myriostigma* (Bishop's Cap)**, and a variety of **Living Rock and Mimicry** plants such as ***Lithops* and *Fenestraria aurantiaca* (Baby Toes)**.

In the ground I have planted different types of hardy ***Agave* and *Crassula***.

1. ***Adenanthos cuneatus* 'Coral Drift' (Flame Bush)**

An unusual low growing shrub to 2 to 4 feet tall by 3 to 5 feet wide with wedge shaped silver-gray leaves that flush bright pink when in new growth and small red flowers with green at their base. Plant in full sun to part shade in well-drained soil. Drought tolerant once established. Hardy to 20 degrees.

2. ***Sedum rupestre* 'Angelina'**

Attractive evergreen ground cover for well-drained soil in full sun. Forms a "feathery" trailing mat of succulent golden-yellow leaves with amber tones in the cold weather. Clusters of yellow flowers appear during the summer. Drought tolerant.

The ***Black Rose (an Aeonium known as Zwartkop)***, was given to me by a friend. Until recently, it was the only succulent to make a home in my garden and not only survive, but flourish. What started out as several 'rose' heads on short stalks in a large pot, soon became a jungle of 1-3' stalks, each topped by a large rose with baby roses popping up underneath the protection of the swollen petals. I've learned that when propagating, it's important to let the newly cut stems dry out a few days prior to replanting (to avoid rot). With a little watering when dry, and quarterly fertilizing (10-10-10), the pot blossoms with new roses filling the gaps. The plant appears black from a distance, but up close has varying shades of purple or burgundy. Quite a lovely bouquet. Can be prone to mealy bugs or aphids, but so far it's bug free. It winters beneath a window in my garage. Now that I've learned how not to kill a succulent, my next venture is a **Woolly Rose**.

Caladrinia spectabilis

Beautiful greyish green foliage, tall stems with *spectabilis* magenta blossoms.

Succulents are so unique and different from one another that it is difficult to name just a few. It is one of my hobbies and I grow many, all in pots. Some of my favorites are ***Kalanchoe thyrsiflora*, *Flapjack***, clumps on short stems and has reddish margins in bright light; ***Pachypodium lamerei*, *Madagascar Palm***. has lush tropical-like greenery, much like a palm; ***Adenium obesum***, a small flowering bush, which is sometimes grown as a bonsai. They are drought tolerant and enjoy sunshine.

I never met a succulent I didn't like! So many favorites. I'm a little partial to **Aeoniums**, all varieties. I also love *Ghost Plant* because it does so well in the Central Valley heat.

Graptopetalum paraguayense, commonly known as **Mother-of-Pearl or Ghost Plant**, a native of Mexico. The stems of the Ghost Plant are trailing, making it a nice feature in a container garden. The plump leaves break off easily, but the leaves can be placed upright in sandy soil where they take root and form a new plant. The stems will also take root where they come in contact with the soil. Its name comes from the pale color of the leaves, ranging from light blue-green when kept in a shady area to grayish pink when grown in a sunny location. The *Ghost Plant* can survive temperatures as low as the mid-twenties (Fahrenheit)

Aeoniums are members of the *Crassulaceae* family. **Echeverias** as well as other rosette-like succulents are often confused with **Aeoniums** (eg. **Dudleyas, Graptopetalums, Pachyverias and Graptoverias**). Most **Aeoniums** come originally from the Canary Islands off the coast of Spain in the Atlantic Ocean, and a few oddball species from several isolated parts of central Africa. *Aeoniums* are one of the most ornamental of all the succulents. They are large, colorful, rubbery looking and beautiful. They are mildly frost tolerant (some more than others), moderately heat tolerant as well, and dependent on bright light to full sun, although water, heat and lighting needs can vary depending on the variety. *Aeoniums* are ideal pot plants needing very little other than soil for support and water. The main water-absorbing roots are near the surface while the deeper roots function as support.

These are the survivors so far. **Senecio rowleyanus (String of Beads)**. I have this hanging in my kitchen. **Aeonium undulatum** outside in pots. **Aloe vera (barbadensis)** lives outside, needs re-potting, blooming at the moment. **Gasteria bicolor**, easy to grow. Stick them in the ground or in pots. Will thrive almost anywhere. Will bleach out in direct, hot sun but do manage well through the winter. Common names for **Gasterias** include **Cow-tongue Cactus, Lawyer's Tongue, Mother-in-law's Tongue, Ox-tongue**.

Hen and Chicks: Echeveria elegans. Grayish rosettes, to 4 inches across. Spreads freely by offsets. Pink flowers in clusters. I like to use them as edging around trees. Shade or morning sun. I cover when we have deep freezes and they survive.

Summer Annuals

Impatiens balsamina, in pinks, purples and white, combined in the mix with an I. New Guinea hybrid of a like color, whether in a border or potted planter. Spring to frost.

Sweet Alyssum, Lobularia maritima, in white, lavender or purple. Gives a sweet fragrance. Plant in a limited space or pots, self-seeds. Spring to frost.

Lobelia erinus, in rich deep blue, '**Crystal Palace**' gives a cooling affect on a hot day. Nice in borders or pots. Spring to frost.

Cosmos bipinnatus, in the pastels, varieties in various heights, in masses or in between shrubs. Self seeds. They sway on thin stems, to & fro, in a breeze. Spring to frost.-----

Impatiens. Shade garden must and lots of color.-----

My very favorite annual is the **California poppy**...it is just such a reliable self-seeder and always reminds one that spring is on the way. The bright orange and beautiful lacy foliage just makes me smile and thank Mother Nature for the perfection of Her color palette!-----

I had the good fortune of visiting Annie's Annuals & Perennials in Richmond, CA when I first became a Master Gardener. A former MG invited Maurine Anderson and me to join her garden club on a wonderful bus trip to the bay area. We only had 45 minutes to shop this nursery.....Oh my goodness! I have never seen so many varieties of poppies....pink, purple, red, black, combinations of these, and the list goes on. A local T.V. crew was there, filming for the evening news and asked if they could talk to me; my response was somewhat like this, "I only have 45 minutes to tour the nursery and make my purchase, and then be back on the bus, and this is my first time here, (pulling my wagon with the beginnings of my selections). I told them they could talk and film, but I had my list of plants that I wanted to purchase and I couldn't stop and visit...I was on a mission! They kept on going, as did I. It was so much fun.

According to the Sunset Garden Book, **Papaver** and **Lathyrus** are listed as annuals and perennials, but the ones I list below are annuals, per Annie's catalog.

Papaver 'Drama Queen' (Annie's descriptions) Fringed edges, 4-5" across, flowers are luscious ruby splashed with deep purple. Ooh la la! 3-4' tall. Self sows. Sun. Avg. water. Annual all zones.

Papaver 'Single Black' The 4-5 " silky rich blackest maroon flowers are divinely crowned with a tiara of white anthers. Self sows, sun, average water. Annual all zones (At the end of the growing season, I like to crush the pods and spread them around. It is fun to see where next year's blooms will pop up!)

Sweet Peas ---Lathyrus odorata 'Cupani': Annie says these are the most fragrant of all Sweet Peas. Lavender & purple. Self sows, sun, average water. All zones, annual. From my 2009 catalog, Annie tells the history of this plant. "Father Francis Cupani found the wild sweet pea growing near his monastery in Sicily. He sent seeds to England in 1699, making it the first ever cultivated Sweet Pea of record." It is by far, my most favorite flower...cutting a bouquet and bringing this simple flower into our home always brightens my day! -

My favorites are: **Impatiens, Zinnias, and Salvia**. I really like the variety of color in the garden. But the main reason is that they do well in my garden.

Zinnia are one my favorites. They are hardy & will grow from seed. They love our valley heat and thrive even on the hottest days. Some of the *zinnia* I like are '**Zahara Cherry**'. Start out bright and fades. Suppose to be drought tolerant. I am testing that theory this year. '**Magellan Coral**' and '**Zowie Yellow**' are two more. I have been fortunate that a lot of the seed comes from AAS . We get to test what grows here.

Salvia: the reds one. '**Lady in Red**'. Attract hummingbirds into the garden. I have been out watering and one was less than 5 inches from my face

My favorite summer annuals are **Zinnias** (any size) and **Cockscomb** (also any size). I like *Zinnias* because they take very little water, bloom all summer into the autumn and come in many colors and sizes. The *Cockscomb* add brilliant color to the bed from May through the first frost. They come back year after year (not always in the size you planted though: one year I planted the 12-18 inch and the following year and every year after they have come back in either the huge headed ones that are 3 feet high or the smaller ones about 2 feet high.) I can always count on them returning each year so there is no replanting

I love **Begonias and Impatiens**. Both do well in pots or planted in flower beds. *Begonias* are worth their weight in gold. They survive the frost and come back again. If I cover them, the frost usually doesn't get the ones on my patio. Nice colors for fillers.

Impatiens give so much color in the shade- last year they bloomed well into the fall- it was hard to pull them out. And there are some amazing new colors in **Sun Impatiens**.----

For my sunny hot areas, I like **Vinca, Lantana, and Alyssum**; in shade, **Impatiens** and **Coleus**. All because they are reliable.-----

My favorite annual is **Impatiens**. They give you a burst of color to welcome spring and carry you through fall. I prefer perennials for the majority of blooming plants but I have to have my Impatiens. I love that they require no deadheading. I also rely on **Lobelia** to give that burst of blue color that compliments the Impatiens.---

Well I like a lot,

Cosmos.....because they have so many heights to choose from and I like the light pastel colors. The only problem is the snails like them even more than I do.

Zinnias.....for the same reasons as the cosmos, plus they last so long into fall and they are good cutting flowers.

Impatiens.....They add such a Big splash of color and and can take the heat pretty well.

Marigolds.....they love the heat and last way past fall.

Bachelor Buttons....the pretty blue color and they reseed so easily.

Lobelia.....a variety of colors and great in pots or hanging baskets

I love

Impatiens for color in the shade.

Lobelia for the intense color of blue.

'Starburst' *Zinnia* for filling out an area in white, gold or orange.

'Lady in Red' *Salvia* for its height (2') and intense red color

Winter Bloomers

It's always delight to have color in the garden during the not-so-colorful months-

Certain types of **Camellias** bloom fall through winter. They are versatile as they can be planted in the ground or in containers. A few varieties: '**Winter's Rose**' is an evergreen hybrid, slow-growing shrub that maxes out at 4-6 feet. It needs light shade protection with moist, well-drained soil. The two-inch pink rose type blooms are eye-catching. '**Winter's Fire**' is another hardy variety with flowers a mix of coral and pink with splashes of white – lovely!

Winter Jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*) has bright yellow flowers that are about one inch in size. The plant is a deciduous vine or shrub that needs full sun to light shade with well-drained soil. It can be trained to climb on a trellis, wall or whatever support is handy, or used as a ground cover.

I get very excited when the **Paper Whites** pop up and grace the landscape.

My absolute favorite is the **Camellia sasanqua 'Yuletide'** that blooms starting just before Thanksgiving (great looking for our Thanksgiving guests as it is in our courtyard entry) and usually continues into March sometime. We can see this plant in bloom from all the interior courtyard windows for additional appreciation. Its size is about 5' tall and wide but I have it trained as an espalier so it is only 2' deep to keep it within the house wall and entry sidewalk. Requires monthly acidic fertilizer after blooming and during the growing season and a little pruning after the flowers drop. That's it! Easy maintenance! (Okay, there is a lot of flower petal drop for a brief time that does require a little cleanup but definitely adds color to the area.)

I love my *Daphne odorata* on my front porch because it has the most wonderful fragrance in late winter. I found a Monrovia camellia called '**Nuccio's Bella Rossa**' which is a stunning multi-layered fire-engine red bloom that is in full bloom at Christmastime. My winter annual shade color are *cyclamen* when are in such cheery whites to pinks to reds.

The first tree I planted after moving to Fresno from San Francisco was a *Dogwood*. It promptly died. I planted three more last year under a huge pine for shade and then had the pine pruned. One of them has died and the other two are at death's door. I will not stop planting dogwood trees until I get it right because the sight of their white blooms on leafless trees is a heart stopper. And to have that in your sight for six weeks or so is indeed a gift. So give yourself the gift of a dogwood this year.

The first two shrubs I planted around the same time as the first dogwood tree were a *Daphne odorata* and *Viburnum x burkwoodii*. With them I had the sense to plant them in real shade and both are thriving. Their flowers lighten dark winter corners; and even though their flowers aren't much to look at, they are profuse and their scent is intoxicating.

My favorite winter blooming bulbs are the various varieties of California's own *Calochortus*. The first time I saw them was in the California natives section of the Berkeley Botanical Garden on Centennial Drive. It was a cold but sunny February day and the raised beds of the *Calochortus* were in bloom. They looked both delicate and inviting. When I went back in May you couldn't see any evidence that something had been growing there so pots are probably the best place to plant them. If you do fall for them, you'll have to be sure to bait for snails and remember that most varieties like a dry summer.