

Almost  
Eden



## The Source for Beautiful, Unusual, Exotic, and Native Plants



### 2015 September Newsletter

A Visit By Royalty    2015 Late Summer Fall Sale    Planting & Dividing Spring & Summer Flowering Perennials

Chimeras – Colorful Expression in Plants    Notes: Open House, John's Big Heart, Package Tracking Upgrade

Our humble nursery and gardens has been graced by royalty this past week with a rare visit by a pair of Queen butterflies as they fluttered among the blossoms of the Milkweeds. And today a beautiful and perfectly formed Monarch paused among the Pentas and sipped from the Batface Cupheas before it ventured around the corner of the greenhouse and out of view. The butterfly population has been building since spring and throughout the summer in our nursery and gardens. The largest and most noticeable butterflies, the Swallowtails and Sulphurs, have been a continuous presence as have their smaller cousins the skippers along with a welcome mixture of bees and other garden beneficials that call our place home. **Bee** sure to plant a variety of flowers that will flower over an extended period of time to provide a continuous supply of nectar and pollen to these wonderful native visitors that will add joy and interest to your garden throughout much of the year.



Almost Eden's [2015 Summer & Fall Sale](#) has just begun and we have marked down well over 130 of our most popular plants. The sale includes a great selection of nectar plants like Porterweeds, Cupheas, perennial Salvias, and Hummingbird Bushes all just in time to plant for fall butterfly and hummingbird gardens. We've also marked down a host of some of our favorite native perennials like Blazing Stars, Coneflowers, Joe Pye Weed, the fragrant Garden Phloxes as well as some rare garden worthy natives like the Neches River Rose Mallow and Broad-Leaved Barbara's Buttons. The sale includes some great garden performers like the new repeat flowering Echo series Red-Hot Pokers and Gold Star Esperanza so be sure to get yours now at great prices, while they last!



Fall is an excellent time for adding new perennials to the garden and landscape so buy them now as supplies may be limited on some varieties and prep them for planting when the days are cooler. Fall rains will help to keep them watered reducing the load on you while they become established through the coming months and preparing them for a great show the following year. Many of our spring and summer flowering perennials will be large enough and in the proper stage to divide this fall for those who are willing to give it a whirl and it's not as hard as it sounds. An excellent quote from the University of Illinois Extension's "[Dividing Perennials](#)" article says that "Many home gardeners have found that the process of division is more traumatic to them, **the gardener**, than it is to the perennial". There are many additional excellent resources online from the extension services and universities and here are some of the ones that we might use:



[Perennials Do Well When Planted In Fall](#) – Allen Owings – LSU Agcenter

[Dividing Perennial Plants: When, Why, & How](#) – Dan Gill – Times Picayune

[Dividing Perennials](#) – Karen Russ & Bob Polomski – Clemson Cooperative Extension

[Dividing Perennials – Gardening with Perennials](#) – University of Illinois Extension

[Properly Dividing Perennials](#) – Richard Jauron & Greg Wallace – Iowa State University Extension



Plants can be expressive in a variety of colorful ways for us to enjoy. Take for example the soon to be flowering Confederate Roses - the white flowered forms open white and darken to a deep rosy pink throughout the day. The red pigments, anthocyanins, in the pure white (white flowers have no pigment) require heat in order to be expressed. We see a similar change in the flowers of the Mutabilis Rose whose creamy yellow flowers change to pink and finally crimson. An acid to neutral soil pH can allow water to dissolve Aluminum making the ions available to the Bigleaf or French Hydrangea, *Hydrangea macrophylla*, that are needed to make the pigment Delphinidin, thus making the flowers blue to purple instead of pink. Moisture, sunlight, and temperature are all factors that affect the intensity and color of fall foliage on many plants. Occasionally we get a natural mutation called a 'chimera', horticulturists generally call this a 'sport', and in this case the same plant actually has two slightly different sets of DNA within it. The flower shown at right is a good example of this expression within a single flower on a double white Althea or Rose of Sharon. Interestingly all flowers above and below this one were the typical pure white but this was a nice surprise 😊. If the new sport appears to be of interest to the gardener, horticulturist, or nurseryman they may decide to mark that section of the stem and isolate it through propagation at the appropriate time. It doesn't always work out but this is one way through which we get many of our newest and most interesting cultivars to add to our gardens and landscapes. Betty Sheffield Camellia is renowned for having produced over 20 different sports; the shrub forms of Old Blush, Craimoiisi Superieur, and Pinkie have all produced climbing forms; and the Dainty White Hibiscus, an exceptionally floriferous Tropical Hibiscus, originated from Dainty Pink. From flowers, to foliage including most variegation, to many of the fruits that we eat, and even to growth form these are often simply examples of chimeras at work. Who knew plants were so expressive and aren't you glad you are here to enjoy them! For more detailed information on this topic see "[Origin, Development, and Propagation of Chimeras](#)" by R. Daniel Lineberger, Professor of Horticulture at Texas A&M University.



We would like to offer our many thanks to all of you who have offered their prayers and best wishes to John as he has pulled through his open heart surgery with flying colors and is now recovering in good spirits at home. It has been something of a calamity with our small family owned nursery losing John, Jeff, Alexis, and Kymberly at the same time but thanks to having a large and strong family we were able to continue operating for these past several weeks. Thanks to modern medicine most of us are back on our feet and should be going strong after a few more weeks of recovery. We do appreciate your patience and understanding during this period. During this time we have welcomed the addition of two new beautiful bouncing little baby girls to our growing family since July: (drum roll & fireworks!!!) now announcing the arrival of Miss Henlea & Miss Harley! Unfortunately due to various health issues in our family we do not plan to have an open house this fall and we will reevaluate the possibility of having one in the spring as the time gets closer. We do hope you can understand, but we do not expect this to limit our ability to serve you from here though!

We have recently upgraded our packaging system so that your shipping address is verified with the USPS prior to shipping and each package is automatically assigned a tracking number. The instant we print your shipping label you are immediately sent an email that includes your tracking number and a link to the USPS website where you can track your package until it arrives safely at your doorstep. We believe this will help to ensure that your plants get to you in a timely manner and in good condition.

Thank you & Good Growing,

John, Bonnie, and Jeff McMillian

And the Crew at [Almost Eden](#)

1240 Smith Rd, Merryville, LA 70653

(337) 375-2114