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Unusual, Exotic, and
Native Plants*



2018 Summer & Fall Sale: Perfect for Pollinators

We have already added over [120 new plants](#) to our selection for the 2018 season including exciting new tropicals, perennials, trees, shrubs, and vines as well as our ever increasing selection of quality native plants for your home and garden. Here at the nursery the butterfly and pollinator populations have been excellent this year and just this week alone we have spotted: Zebra Swallowtails, Tiger Swallowtails, Giant Swallowtails, Pipevine Swallowtails, Palamedes Swallowtails, and Spicebush Swallowtails along with Red Admirals, Goatweed Butterflies, Buckeyes, the ever-abundant Gulf Fritillaries, Red-Spotted Purples, Giant Clouded Sulphurs, Little Yellows, and a variety of skipper butterflies. If you are not already aware, many pollinator populations build as the growing season progresses and reach a maximum in late summer and fall. This week we officially kick off our [2018 Summer and Fall Sale](#) that includes a great selection of pollinator plants like Porterweeds, Lantanas, Agastache, and Salvias which are sure to draw in pollinators basically until the first frost.



Agastache: A Pollinator Paradise

Agastache can go by a variety of names including Hyssop, Anise Hyssop, Hummingbird Mint and more but no matter what you call it these species and their hybrids are designed with pollinators in mind. The blue to purple flowered forms with dense spikes of small tubular flowers are important bee plants but the butterflies and hummingbirds will find their way to them as well. This past fall, we enjoyed watching the Monarch butterflies drinking heavily from the blue/purple flowered Agastache, like Black Adder, as they were making their way to Mexico for winter. This year we have added Little Adder to our selection which is a more compact form similar to Black Adder but with better branching and the potential to outpace its larger relative when it comes to overall flower production. Like Black Adder, Little Adder produces dark dense spikes of short tubular purple flowers from late spring or early summer to frost. The dainty spikes of Little Adder are about 1/4 the size of Black Adder but this is a nice compact plant with excellent flower power. These are hardy perennials that do best with a full to mostly sunny location and good air circulation. In other words, don't crowd them too much by placing them amongst larger plants. Good to excellent drainage is key to winter survival of these perennials as wet winter soils can cause root rot. A mineral soil, like a sandy loam, is preferred when growing Agastache in a garden and landscape setting.



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail on Black Adder Agastache

The orange, red, yellow and sometimes pink to fuchsia colored Agastache with longer tubular flowers were designed with hummingbirds and butterflies in mind. Of course, everyone knows that bees do not see the color red so this disguises plants with flowers in this color range so that the nectar is available for their primary pollinators. Also, by having longer tubular flowers in the 1-2" range it makes it more difficult for most bees to reach the nectar deep inside. Bees can still smell the sweet sugary nectar that many red flowers produce and some larger bees have the ability to cut a hole near the base of these flowers to reach or 'rob' the nectar inside without providing pollination. Many of these are appropriately called Hummingbird Mints and they have nice anise or licorice scented to almost fruitily fragrant grayish foliage. These plants are generally drought resistant once well-established although periodic deep watering will help to promote new growth and to keep them flowering

throughout the growing season. Their fragrant foliage helps them to avoid being browsed by deer and rabbits. These Hummingbird Mints also make low maintenance container plants allowing you to draw the pollinators in close to your favorite sitting or viewing area.

If flowering slows down, you can deadhead the old flower spikes and sometimes a light shearing is enough to promote new growth and additional flowers. In midsummer we often cut ours back to about 1/3 or 1/4 their original height to promote a new flush of foliage and flowers. Agastache will put up new stems from the base and once you see them doing so you can selectively cut the old poorly flowering stems to near ground level to make way for the new ones. If you haven't tried these colorful Agastache you and your pollinators are missing out! Personally, I would rate it right up there with Salvias for attracting these important garden beneficials. [Click here](#) to see our full lineup of Agastache which range from the typical 20-30" high types like Black Adder (blue and purple), Coronado Red (orange fading to near red), and Apricot Sunrise (orange) to compact plants that top out at 12-18" high like Tango (orange), Arizona Sun (sunny yellow), and Morello (dark pink).



Clockwise from top right: Black Adder Agastache – purple/blue, Arizona Sun Agastache - yellow, Sinaloan Blue Sage – deep blue, and Silke's Dream Salvia - red



Chapel Hill Lantana: Moving the Boundaries of Lantana to Zone 7

The ever-popular and cold hardy [Chapel Hill Lantana series](#), which originated from the zone 7 garden of renown horticulturist Dr. Michael Dirr, has expanded this year with the introductions of Chapel Hill Miss Tara™, Chapel Hill Sunnyside Up, and Chapel Hill Sunset Orange. These Lantana all have a mounding habit which is between the low spreading habit of Lantana like New Gold (considered to be a parent of the original Chapel Hill Yellow and Chapel Hill Gold, Miss Huff is suspected to be the other parent) and the large shrub-like habit typical of *Lantana camara* (we grew up calling this introduced species Ham-N-Eggs, although there is a sterile cultivar with that name) and the native *Lantana horrida*, the Texas Lantana or Bacon-N-Eggs. The flowers of Chapel Hill Miss Tara™ are very reminiscent of Ham-N-Eggs with golden eyed pastel yellow flowers that age to a rosy pink with a darker pink eye. Chapel Hill Sunnyside Up offers up pastel yellow flowers with a golden eye that mature to a creamy white with a golden eye reminiscent of this cultivar's namesake. Possibly my personal favorite of these three is the Chapel Hill Sunset Orange with dark golden yellow flowers that mature to a golden orange. All of these cultivars seem to have the deep green foliage coloration of New Gold creating a nice back drop for the flowers. The Chapel Hill Lantana series is shown at left and starting at the top these are: Chapel Hill Gold, Chapel Hill Yellow, Chapel Hill Miss Tara™, Chapel Hill Sunnyside Up, and Chapel Hill Sunset Orange.

Porterweeds are Top Pollinator Plants: Almost Eden's Newest Additions



When it comes to attracting pollinators, few plants can outperform Lantana the way that Porterweed has the ability to do so. [Porterweeds](#) are an important nectar source for overwintering Hummingbirds in the tropics and so they know this plant well. Hummingbirds and Clouded Giant Sulphurs seem to prefer Coral, Purple, Lavender and possibly in that order. Butterflies of all shapes and sizes do not seem to care which Porterweed is available although many butterfly gardeners seem to prefer the Purple with Coral and Lavender not far behind. The larger Bumblebees and Carpenter Bees generally prefer the purple and blue species and cultivars. At one point a gardener thought that our 'Lavender' was actually the purple form of the Coral Porterweed, *Stachytapheta mutabilis* var. *violacea*. We have since learned that our Lavender, which appears to be sterile or nearly sterile, is a hybrid. We now have the purple form of the Coral Porterweed and have named it as Henlea's

Hummingbird Heaven in honor of my granddaughter. It is slightly more compact than Coral and has the large flower size but with a dark circle of coral/purple eye and in the right light you can see the coral/orange overtones especially in the older flowers.

Porterweed is not known for being reliably cold hardy and this is one of the very few annuals that I will reliably add to my butterfly and hummingbird gardens each year. I have seen Coral Porterweed live over for 2-3 years where it has a protective winter mulch and a well-drained, typically mineral soil. One particular Coral Porterweed in our Hummingbird Garden is now about 4 years old and last year it produced a wonderfully variegated branch which we promptly collected and propagated. The variegated new growth is splashed and splotched with large contrasting patches of creamy yellow that mature to a creamy white and contrasts beautifully with the large spikes of dark coral flowers. We have named this cultivar [Mercedes' Magic](#) after my daughter. We think the wonderful combination of variegated foliage, the tall spikes of coral flowers, and the continual visitation by a variety of pollinators will provide a magical experience in the garden and as a container plant.

A variegated Purple Porterweed seedling has developed this year and we hope to isolate and propagate it to be able to offer it in the coming seasons. It has dark green foliage that is yellow variegated when young and matures to creamy white. Watch for Jen's Jewel in the spring and summer of 2019.



Trumpet Creeper: New Additions and What to Know



We have a love hate relationship with the native Trumpet Creeper, *Campsis radicans*. We love the fact that it flowers for most of the summer and readily attracts hummingbirds, bees, and likely other pollinators. We hate the fact that it reseeds so readily as the tuberous roots go deep and are difficult to remove from desirable garden areas.

Trumpet Creeper makes a great plant for fence rows and in natural areas where it is far enough from the garden that the wind-borne seeds do not make it there. This is a tough, reliable, and drought resistant native vine and there are sterile hybrids like Indian Summer™ and Madame Galen that can be used within garden settings. We have watched a pastel yellow and dark red form, which both happen to be growing among the Goumi Berries, for many years and thought that they might be good additions for folks who have natural areas and might like a different color than the typical dark orange. We have named these after hummingbirds to highlight their importance to these aerial acrobats. The dark red form is Ruby Red, named obviously for our Ruby Throated Hummingbirds, and the yellow form is named Mango Yellow after the Mango Hummingbird.



The Brown Anole: A Not So Beneficial Beneficial

We have a new, if unwelcome, visitor to our area this year, the Brown Anole has made its first appearance in our nursery and gardens. This small darkly patterned, brown lizard is an introduced species from Cuba and the Bahamas that has been known in the Southeastern US for over 40 years. It has been released and/or has escaped into the wild and has been sold as a pet. Unfortunately, it outcompetes our native Carolina Anoles and is known to eat smaller ones along with other native species and anything else that it can fit in its mouth. The Brown Anoles can change color to a dark brown or near black but not to green like our Carolina Anoles. We have also read that you can fry the Brown Anoles up whole and it is reported that they taste like bacon, not that we have tried this, nor do we recommend it, lol.



Brown or Bahaman Anole

Almost Eden vs. Amazon's Third-Party Vendors: One More Reason to Support Verified Independent Mail Order Nurseries

In 2017 we learned that our plants, along with plants and plant products from about 40 other mail-order nurseries, were being sold on Amazon's platform by third-party vendors at truly exorbitant prices typically 3-4 times or more than what these online nurseries offered them at. This company, Mulfi-Corp based in Jakarta, Indonesia, and I suspect that there are others, was offering over 20,000 plant products making it probably the largest retail mail order company in the US. They were even using copyrighted images and information 'scraped' from the online nursery's websites. When an unwary customer would order the products through Amazon, this company would simply turn around and order the plant from the unsuspecting nursery. They would then request that the order be shipped as a 'Gift' order and without an invoice in the box, which is required by state and federal agriculture agencies. It is not illegal to do this, except for the copyright violations, and it is a common practice on Amazon. The moral of this story is simply 'buyer beware' when shopping on Amazon and similar websites. If you would like to learn more about this please read "[The Amazon Effect - From live plant sales to hard goods, Amazon.com and online commerce are changing how consumers shop and how brands and growers sell](#)" by Jolene Hansen available online and in the July issue of Nursery Magazine. To learn more about our battle with Amazon to get these products removed from their platform read "[Bad Actors on Amazon – American nurseries should be vigilant against an inventory scraping scam](#)" by Matt McClellan.

Thank you for taking the time to peruse our 2018 Summer and Fall Sale Newsletter and if you know of anyone who would be interested in reading it you can forward it to them by copying the below link:

[Almost Eden's 2018 Summer and Fall Sale Newsletter](#)

Textual version of the link:

https://almostedenplants.com/shopping/growing_guides/AE%202018%20Summer%20Fall%20Sale.pdf

You can sign up to receive our periodic [newsletter here](#).

Thank You & Good Growing,
John, Bonnie, & Jeff McMillian
& the Crew at [Almost Eden](#)

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