



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



March 2015 Newsletter

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New for Spring of 2015



We've already added over 40 new plants to our catalog for 2015! Including some of the newest and hottest plants available like the new variegated Loropetalum, or Chinese Witch Hazel, called [Jazz Hands™](#), a 2015 Proven Winners® Color Choice® selection. It has wonderful pink and cream variegation splashed across the dark burgundy foliage and produces frilly fuchsia colored flowers in early spring as a bonus. We have two exciting new Clematis this year – [Happy Jack™](#) and [Pink Mink®](#), also 2015 Proven Winners® Color Choice® selections. Happy Jack™ is a free flowering improvement (who thought it was possible?) on the ever popular Jackmanii. It produces 3-5" flowers

over an extended period and is compact enough to be enjoyed in a container. Pink Mink® is an award winning selection from the hybridizer of [Sweet Summer Love](#), Szczepan Marczyński of Poland. This is an exceptionally free flowering and vigorous Clematis producing a summer long display of brilliant fuchsia pink flowers. Clematis are long-lived perennial vines that will grace your garden for many years to come if provided with the proper conditions. To learn more about the planting and care of the "Queen of Vines" see our [Clematis Growing Guide](#).



J.C. Raulston Arboretum and Dr. Dennis Werner's [Lo' & Behold™](#) series of compact butterfly bushes have been a great addition to the garden with their tight, dwarf habit and ample flower power. [Lilac Chip](#) is our newest addition and it is truly a miniature growing to 1-2 feet high and wide and producing a seemingly non-stop display of lilac colored, fragrant, nectar rich flowers that are excellent for pollinators. It is small enough for containers or for a spot at the front of the garden or landscape. Another advantage of the Lo' & Behold™ series is that they are nearly sterile, this allows them to spend their energy on flower production instead of seed production, this also limits their chance of escaping

cultivation as well.

Dr. Jim Ault at the Chicago Botanic Gardens has brought the horticultural world the Prairieblues series of hybrid Baptisias and this year we have finally been able to add [Starlite™](#). It produces spikes of light lavender, pea-like blossoms on sturdy stalks in late spring and summer. Baptisia, or False Indigo, are long-lived, tap-rooted perennials that are like a fine wine and only get better with age. In time these durable perennials can put up upwards of 50 or more lupine-like stalks of flowers that are great in the garden or in a vase. Did you know that *Baptisia*, or False Indigo, are found naturally nowhere else but in North America? The extensive taproots of these perennials make them drought resistant and they will grace your garden year after year. You will want to plan ahead and be sure to plant them where you intend to leave them permanently as they can be difficult to transplant once they are well-established.



Are you feeling a little fruity after this long winter? We have an excellent new Pomegranate this year called [Ariana](#). It produces medium to large fruit with deep, dark red, sweet flesh surrounding small, soft seeds making this Pomegranate perfect for fresh eating or adding to salads. It was tied at the top spot as the highest rated Pomegranate during the 2008 trials at the University of California at Davis. It was originally selected by Dr. Gregory Levin at the Experimental Station of Plant Genetic Resources in Garrygala, Turkmenistan.

New & Coming Natives for 2015



Flat-Top Goldenrod

We are continuously expanding our selection of native plants with the heaviest concentration on what we believe are excellent native perennials. This year we have added [Flat-Top or Shiny Goldenrod](#), *Oligoneuron nitida*, it was a *Solidago* in a previous life. This is a clump forming perennial producing wide, flattened clusters of bright sunny yellow flowers in summer on a clump forming, drought, and deer resistant perennial that only grows to about 24-30" high. We've also added the [Dwarf Crested Iris](#), *Iris cristata*, a native of shaded woodland habitats that develops into a low, groundcovering mass of foliage that is interspersed with bluish-purple to lavender flowers in spring. Later this spring and summer watch for us to have many more new

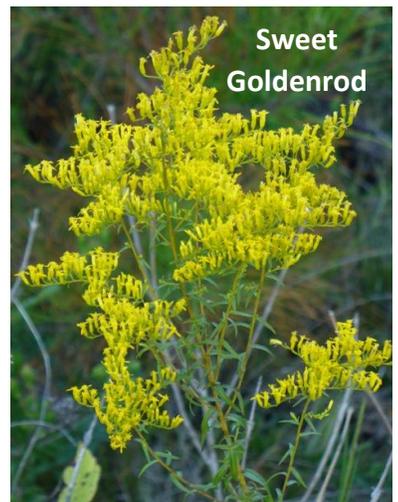


natives available like the wonderfully fragrant [Sweet Goldenrod](#). It's clump forming, somewhat drought resistant, and you can even make a very nice licorice flavored tea from it if you don't leave the flowers for the pollinators. Bonnie says this is her favorite seed to clean simply due to its fragrance and I'm not sure it doesn't get stronger when it's been dried. Or how about a potential lawn replacement for well-



Narrowleaf Silk Grass

drained soils, the rhizomatous [Narrowleaf Silk Grass](#) or *Pityopsis graminifolia*. Unlike grass, in fall it produces loose flower stalks to about 18" high that are topped by dainty 1" golden yellow daisies. The rest of the year the foliage is usually less than 8" high. It's drought resistant, somewhat shade tolerant, and doesn't seem to be bothered by the deer and rabbits. The dark blue-green grass-like foliage has a silvery cast due to the long silky hairs that cover it.



Sweet Goldenrod

Some Colorful & Easy Late Winter Flowering Shrubs to Brighten Things Up



For Fragrant, Early Spring Flowering Shrubs Consider Deciduous Azaleas



A Predatory Click Beetle? – The Eastern Eyed Click Beetle

This is a very large and fairly distinctive Click Beetle found in the eastern and central US from the Gulf Coast to Canada. Adults can be 1-2" long and are normally out and about during spring and early summer. The mealworm-like larva of this species, usually called wireworms, are predatory and often feed on wood boring grubs. In a lab study each one of the larva of this species consumed at least 200 of the flat-headed borers of Long Horned Beetle larvae during this stage. The large size of this Click Beetle and the distinctive, large, white rimmed eye-spots on its pronotum make it easy to identify. The adults of *Alaus oculatus* generally feed on nectar and sap and may show up around your outdoor lights so keep an eye out for it. Gravid females lay their eggs in the soil. So instead of feeding this large juicy looking insect to the chickens, our preferred method of organic pest control for larger plant pests, we opted to release it.



News: Good Bye Old Man Winter!, 2015 Spring Open House, & More

Have you heard? Spring is finally here. Old man winter is done they say, at least in much of the eastern half of the US and its hopeful for much of the western half as well. Elsewhere in the news, we are excited to announce that Almost Eden has been named as a Garden Watchdog Top 5 Company for Tropicals and Tender Perennials and have been selected again as a Watchdog Top 30 Company in 2015 thanks to the kind and generous comments of our customers!

Almost Eden's **2015 Spring Open House** is scheduled for the weekend of May 2nd and May 3rd and we'll be open from 9AM until 5PM on both Saturday and Sunday. Our favorite speaker Dr. Charles M. Allen, noted taxonomist, retired professor, author, and currently the botanist for Fort Polk, Louisiana, will be giving a talk on **Edible Plants** at 2PM on Saturday. Jeff will have a question and answer booth setup so feel free to bring your questions and plant problems. So set the date for your calendar and come and join us for one day or both as we open our nursery and gardens to the public for these two days only this spring. Feel free to place your order online for pickup here and we'll refund your shipping and handling. Optimally advance orders need to be placed by 6PM, April 26th, the Sunday prior to Open House. Or print your wish list and bring it with you and we'll do our best to fill it on site.

Growing & Planting Camellias



We are just now passing peak Camellia season here in the gardens and we've just finished putting together our new [Camellia Planting & Growing Guide](#) to help you get started with growing and planting these beautiful, late winter and spring flowering, long-lived, large evergreen shrubs. Late winter and early spring is an excellent time to get these long-lived, easy to grow evergreens in the ground. In late January Dan Gill, an LSU AgCenter Horticulturist, put out an excellent **Get it Growing** article titled "[Camellias are Outstanding in Containers](#)" showing just how useful these easy to grow shrubs can be. For additional detailed Camellia growing information see the following extension resources:

[Sasanquas, Dwarf Camellias Add Color to Early-Winter Landscapes](#) by Allen Owings, LSU AgCenter Horticulturist

[Shi-Shi Gashira Camellia named Louisiana Super Plant](#) – Get it Growing by Dan Gill, LSU AgCenter Horticulturist

[Camellias Brighten the Winter Landscape](#) - Get It Growing by Dan Gill, LSU AgCenter Horticulturist

[Camellia Culture for Home Gardeners](#) – by James T. Midcap, Extension Horticulturist, et al., UGA Cooperative Extension

[The Culture of Camellias: The State Flower of Alabama](#) – Alabama Cooperative Extension System – ANR-0202

You can see all of our growing guides, information on garden beneficials, as well as some of our past newsletters on our [Growing Guides](#) page.

Thank You & Good Growing,

John, Bonnie, & Jeff McMillian

And the Crew at [Almost Eden](#)

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