

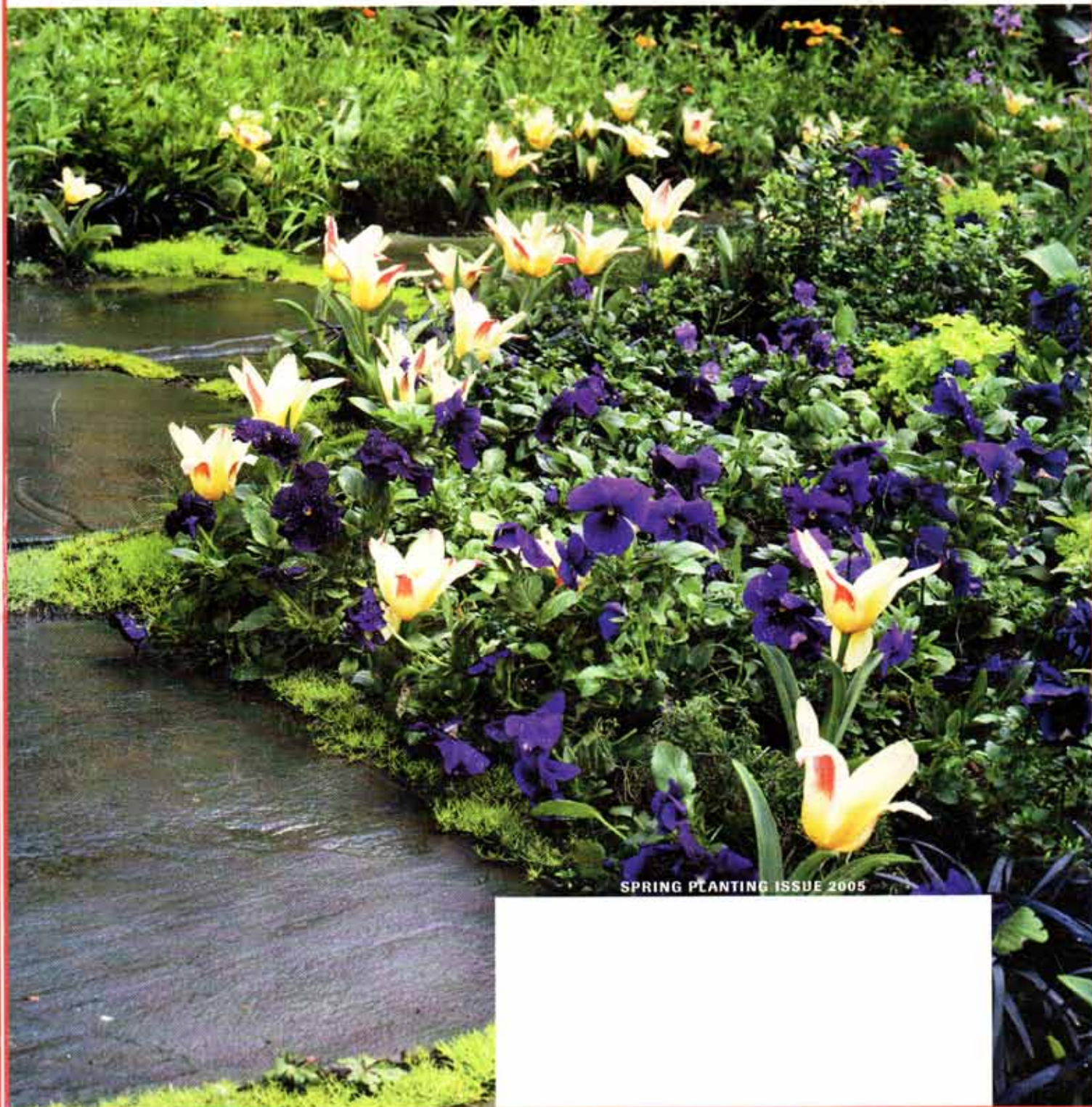
BONUS ISSUE

SPECIAL SPRING PLANTING ISSUE

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SPRING PLANTING ISSUE 2005

MORE FOR THE MID-ATLANTIC

SPECIAL MID-ATLANTIC SUPPLEMENT

March CHECKLIST

by Cynthia A. Brown,
Educational Horticulturist,
Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria, VA

■ **BUDGET EXTENDERS:** Pot up stored tender bulbs: cannas, callas, colocasias, dahlias, and tuberous begonias. The bulbs should be retrieved from winter storage and potted up in a well-drained, soilless mix. Give them a head start in a sunny window; do not place in the garden until mid-June. If you haven't overwintered any tender bulbs, visit your local nursery to buy "naked" bulbs—they are a budget booster. A naked elephant ear purchased in March is a third of the cost of a potted one in June.

■ **BED PREPARATION:** If you have not had your soil tested in a while, send a sample to your local extension office. The test will tell you the current pH and which nutrients, if any, are lacking. Some plant nutrient deficiencies are caused by inappropriate pH levels, which lock the availability of soil nutrients. Adjusting the pH level with applications of sulphur or lime will release nutrients and help facilitate absorption. Nitrogen moves through the soil quickly;

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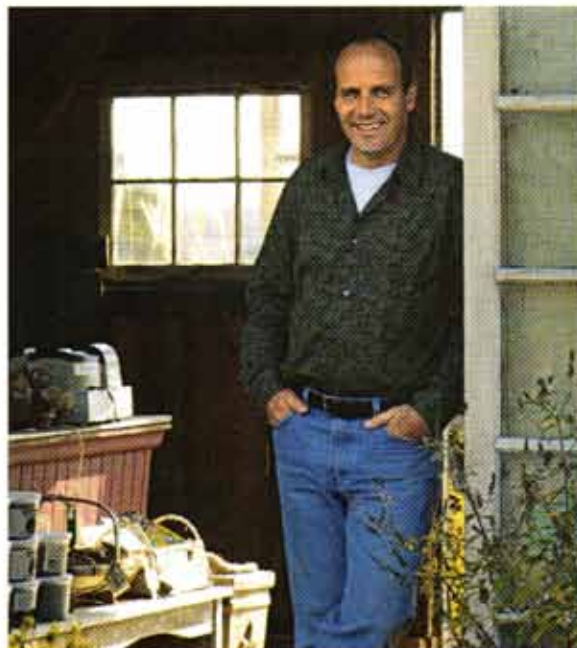
On the Road: PA

*Linden Hill's plant
rarities beckon*

LINDEN HILL GARDENS What could be better than a trip to your favorite plant-shopping haunt? Finding an exciting new source that immediately jumps to the top of your must-visit list—a place where new is the norm, and the unexpected is everywhere you look. Linden Hill Gardens in Ottsville, Pennsylvania, is just such a destination for gardeners on the hunt for the very latest and greatest new introductions.

Linden Hill Gardens is the creation of owner Jerry Fritz, who began his garden design business back in 1989 with just himself and one truck. An inveterate plant collector, Jerry eventually built up an extensive stock of exceptional plants to use in his design installations, and the business outgrew its original space. When Jerry Fritz Garden Design relocated to a 20-acre property in scenic northern Bucks County, Jerry took the opportunity to open Linden Hill Gardens, so he could make his special plant finds available to the public as well as to his clients.

While the nursery itself is fairly new—this marks its fourth year of operation—the collection of classic barns and outbuildings provides a tranquil country setting. Step through



Owner and garden designer Jerry Fritz in Linden Hill Gardens' "greeting barn."

the quaint "greeting barn" that adjoins the parking lot, and you'll enter a beautifully arranged sales area that could easily be a garden in its own right—except that the plants change dramatically from week to week, as the exuberant sales staff works its magic with whatever happens to be at the peak of perfection. Plants are grouped by similar growing needs or by particular traits, such as deer resistance.

For visitors who prefer a more straightforward shopping experience, there is an area where plants are arranged in A-Z order—a big help for collectors who prefer to start with a scan of their favorite genera. Other sales areas feature intriguing collections of specialty

March CHECKLIST

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add sparingly and limit applications to areas with actively growing plants. Top-dressing beds with one to two inches of compost amends the soil and supplies perennials with trace nutrients, usually enough to keep perennials healthy and prevent rank growth. Beds composed of sandy soil and highly cultivated areas, such as vegetable gardens, annual beds, or containers, usually benefit from applications of organic fertilizers.

■ **NEATNESS COUNTS:** Clean out any remaining beds that have not been given attention. A clean bed will reduce the amount of diseases transferred to emerging perennials. Now is the time to cut a clean edge on the perimeter of your beds. It is easier to edge an "empty" bed and disperse the soil in place than to haul the extra soil to the compost pile. Be diligent in removing any remaining winter weeds—once they have gone to seed you have increased the seed bank and ensured yourself many more weeding hours.

■ **PRUNING CHORES:** Cut back all grasses and most perennials. Wait until after buds break and new growth begins before trimming dead stems out of shrubs such as *Salvia*, *Caryopteris*, *Calli-carpa*, *Perovskia*, *Lavandula*, *Rosmarinus* and *Buddleia*. Summer-blooming hydrangeas should show strong signs of life before a pruner ever touches a stem to remove winterkill. Now is the perfect time to thin congested shrubs, both evergreen and deciduous, to rejuvenate and shape.

■ **DIVIDE AND MULTIPLY:** Spreading perennials such as asters,

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On the Road: PA

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plants hand-picked by Jerry on his travels throughout the United States.

Linden Hill is open by chance during the week, and for Plant Event weekends held through the growing season. On these select days, visitors are welcome to join Jerry on a guided Garden Walk or to roam the sales areas and display gardens on their own. In midsummer—July 30 and 31 this year—Linden Hill hosts a Perennial Extravaganza, with extended shopping hours, speakers, and an extensive offering of cutting-edge perennials from the country's top nurseries and

hybridizers. Plant fanatics often make the Perennial Extravaganza part of a whole-day expedition, combining it with a visit to nearby Parkside Orchid Nursery, which holds its annual Orchid Fest on the same weekend. For the complete schedule of Linden Hill's 2005 Plant Events, check out www.jerryfritzgardendesign.com or call 610-847-1300. For more information on Parkside Orchid Nursery, visit www.parksideorchids.com or call 610-847-8039. — Nancy J. Ondra is a freelance writer who gardens in Bucks County, PA. She is co-author of *The Perennial Gardener's Design Primer* with Stephanie Cohen (Storey Publishing, 2005).

Unusual Suspects

Beyond glads and dahlias, there are a host of summer-flowering bulbs

Every year it happens again. Come the end of May, I shove yellowing daffodil leaves under the nearest perennial, pull out and discard any withering tulips (at least the ones the deer didn't eat), and wonder just what bulbs I will plant for summer interest. Garden centers offer a smattering of the familiar—cannas and dahlias, gladiolas and caladiums. These are good plants, but I want something different. Years ago, a paucity of unusual bulbs left me saying, "Is that all there is, just the usual suspects?" I started a search for new choices to enhance my summer garden. I didn't care if they were hardy. Because they bloom soon after they are planted, I can set them out at the same time as my tomatoes and expect a performance that same summer. Given the right site with the right drainage, some summer bulbs are hardier than they're given credit for. Even if they are not hardy, these bulbs are easy to store over the winter for replanting in the

spring. Now I look forward to warm weather, long nights, and the welcome return of bulbs that bloom beyond spring.

PINEAPPLE LILY

Pineapple lily, *Eucomis bicolor* (Zones 6–10), is an outstanding, easy-to-grow bulb from sub-tropical South Africa. Its glossy, straplike leaves form a rosette, from the center of which arises a purple-spotted scape. The upper portion of the 12- to 18-inch-tall stem is densely packed with small, starlike apple-green or greenish white flowers, each with a thin purple margin. *E. comosa* has purple-spotted leaves with green, purple and white, or all-purple flowers. This abundant mass of flowers is crowned with a small tuft of leaves resembling those atop a pineapple. Some of



Eucomis bicolor

March CHECKLIST

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daylilies, hostas, physostegia, and chrysanthemums should be lifted, divided, and transferred to other parts of the garden or given to friends. Be a good gardening buddy; when you share quick-spreading perennials, share information on the aggressiveness of the plant as well.

■ **PEST CHECK:** Check emerging succulent stems and leaves for sucking insects such as aphids, scale, and mites. The pests tend to appear before the "good guys" come on the scene. Don't panic and bring out the big guns; the pests can generally be removed with organic countermeasures: insecticidal soap, superfine oil, or even just a strong stream of water. Check with your state extension Web site or local Master Gardeners for low-impact treatments. They may even be familiar with emergence dates of the good insects that prey upon your pests, therefore eliminating the need to treat with insecticides.

■ **PREVENTATIVE MEASURES:** Install hoop or pea staking on early summer perennials like peonies and balloon flowers before the stems get too tall and begin to flop. Staking later in the season (after the plants have reached their towering potential) distracts from their statuesque beauty. Irritated by an extra-tall flopper? Pound a length of PVC pipe into the ground (to ground level) next to the perennial large enough to support a heavy duty stake. When the plant starts to lean, drop a stake into the pipe, and this way provide support without disrupting the plant's form or root system.

Unusual Suspects

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my pineapple lilies have been with me for more than 10 years. Kept dry in their pots in the basement, they start growing in April. Newly purchased bulbs should be potted up, given one good watering, then left alone until they show signs of growth. When the weather is mild and settled, either plant the bulbs in the ground or set their pots in full sun to light shade. Another great thing about pineapple lilies is that they look wonderful after their flowers fade and their seed pods begin to swell and start to resemble fat peas or miniature balloons. *E. autumnalis* is another sweetie to look for, with creamy, old ivory, or white flowers on dainty plants only 8 to 12 inches tall.

DRAGON ARUM

Hardy, unusual, and pest-proof, dragon arum, *Dracunculus vulgaris* (Zones 7–10), makes an interesting addition to the summer garden. One of several bizarre relatives of jack-in-the-pulpit, dragon arum thrives in dappled shade, has an abominable smell when in flower, and is left alone by most vermin, from voles to deer, in my New Jersey garden. Carrion beetles and flies pollinate dragon arums, drawn to their odor of rotting meat. Since this is not a good smell to have wafting through an open window, I keep my dragon arums down in the woods, interplanted with ferns and other plants that crave dappled shade and moist soil high in organic matter. Plant the tubers with their rounded bottoms facing downward. Their snakeskin-mottled stalks grow quickly to a height of three feet or more. Two pedatisect leaves, with dark green, narrow, toelike leaflets in a horseshoe arrangement, are attractive in their own right. Then a tightly furled spathe appears between them. As the spadix peeks out the tip, the spathe's edge takes on a ruffled appearance as it unfurls and flattens, revealing a velvety, reddish purple in-

terior. The stench peaks on the second to third day, then fades.

VOODOO LILY

A cousin of dragon arum, voodoo lily (*Sauromatum venosum*) is also hardy in Zones 7–10. But while the dragon arum sends up leaves first and then flowers, voodoo lily does just the reverse. In early summer, a naked flower appears, sitting close to the ground. A glossy reddish purple spathe curls around itself, and a long, thin



Sauromatum venosum

spadix stands straight up from the center. Not quite as putrid-smelling, this one will still have you thinking you need to find a pooper-scooper. After the flower fades, large, dramatic green leaves appear, somewhat bolder in form than the dragon arum, lending an attractive, slightly tropical look to the shady garden for the remainder of the summer. Voodoo lilies reproduce readily, and tend to work their way to the surface, presenting a good opportunity to move them elsewhere in the garden. They can also be grown in water as houseplants (above).



Zantedeschia aethiopica

CALLA LILY

Calla lily, a third member of the arum family (Araceae), provides appealing elegance to the summer garden. Whether you prefer the pristine white flowers of stately,

More for the Mid-Atlantic

March/April EVENTS

THROUGH MARCH 18

Welcome Spring Indoors

Longwood Gardens
Kennett Square, PA
610-388-1000
www.longwoodgardens.org



MARCH 1–MAY 1

Orchid Express

Museum of Natural History
Washington, D.C.
202-633-9239
www.mnh.si.edu

MARCH 5

U.S. Botanic Garden Production Facility Open House

U.S. Botanic Garden Conservatory
Washington, D.C.
202-226-4082
www.usbg.gov

MARCH 12

Copeland Native Plant Seminar

Delaware Nature Society
Hockessin, DE
302-239-2334
www.delawarenaturesociety.org

MARCH 15-18

Cultivating the Written Word: Creative Garden Writing from Production to Publication

Workshop with Horticulture
contributing editors C. Colston Burrell
and Lucy Hardiman
Green Spring Gardens Park
Alexandria, VA
703-642-5173
www.greenspring.org

Unusual Suspects

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Zantedeschia albomaculata

three-foot-tall *Zantedeschia aethiopica* (Zones 7–10), or the tropical sherbet colors of its smaller, 12- to 18-inch-tall relatives, there's no question that calla lilies add flair to the summer garden. They're appealing in a flower border, near a pond, or in a pot. The straplike to somewhat arrow-shaped green leaves of some species, such as the greenish white, splotched with crimson at the base *Z. albomaculata* (Zones 7/8–10), and some cultivars, such as soft yellow 'Black-Eyed Beauty', dark rose, cream-throated 'Pink Persuasion', and pale yellow 'Solfatare', are splattered with white spots. Flower colors range from white to yellow to rose pink, candy apple, and even deep burgundy-black ('Schwarzwald'). Provide full sun, rich soil, and ample moisture for flowers from mid- to late summer. The flowers are long lasting and wonderful in bouquets.

TUBEROSE

The tuberose *Polianthes tuberosa* (Zones 8–10) is not much for looks, producing a few narrow, grayish green leaves and tall, 18- to 24-inch stems, with unimpressive, waxy white tubular flowers. ('The Pearl', a double form, is a notable exception.) However, the seductive perfume of this Mexican native is fabulous. Outdoors, it is entrancing; indoors, it can be overwhelming. Tubers can be slow to get going. You can speed them along by starting them indoors in individual pots



Polianthes tuberosa 'The Pearl'

warmed with bottom heat. Provide the barest amount of water until they start to grow. Once in growth, give them full sun, lots of water, and regular feeding. I find plants with large leaves, such as *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum' and *Plectranthus argentatus*, make good companions for tuberose. The tuberose I start in May flower by early September. Dig the tubers once the foliage has begun to wither. Store them packed in dry sand at cool to moderate temperatures.

MEXICAN SHELLFLOWER

Mexican shellflower, *Tigridia pavonia* (Zones 8–10), has a sultry tropical beauty uniquely its own. Starting in late summer,



Tigridia pavonia

More for the Mid-Atlantic

March/April EVENTS

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MARCH 19

Lahr Native Plant Symposium

U.S. National Arboretum
Washington, D.C.
202-245-2726
www.usna.usda.gov

MARCH 23

Annual Spring Fling

Prince William Unit of the Virginia
Cooperative Extension
Manassas, VA
703-792-7747

MARCH 24

Fourth Annual Celebration of Horticulture Therapy

U.S. Botanic Garden Conservatory
Washington, D.C.
202-226-4082
www.usbg.gov

MARCH 31

Opening of Chanticleer

Wayne, PA
610-687-4163
www.chanticleergarden.org

APRIL 3-5

Colonial Williamsburg Garden Symposium

Williamsburg, VA
800-603-0948
www.colonialwilliamsburg.com

APRIL 16-24

Virginia Historic Garden Week

The Garden Club of Virginia
804-644-7778
www.vagardenweek.org

APRIL 30

Annual Plant Sale

University of Delaware
Fischer Greenhouse Laboratory
Newark, DE
302-831-2531
www.udel.edu

APRIL 30

Rare Plant Auction

Delaware Center for Horticulture
Wilmington, DE
302-658-6262
www.dehort.org

Unusual Suspects

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each flower opens in a stunning display of three large satiny petals in white, rose, coral, or yellow. The base of each petal, and that of three smaller ones in the center, is blotched with dark red. This Mexican native prefers full sun, hot conditions, and good drainage. Though drought tolerant, my plants managed to perform even in the soggy, cool summer of 2004. While each flower lasts just one day, their 18- to 24-inch-tall stems bear many blooms, which open in sequence. Upright, swordlike leaves reach only 12 to 18 inches. I once planted a container of vivid yellow *T. 'Aurea'* with yellow gazanias, yellow marigolds, and *Lysimachia nummularia 'Aurea'*; it looked sunny even on gray days. Tigridia corms are so inexpensive that I find it easier to purchase new ones every year.

SPIDER LILY

One bulb that I do keep from year to year is the beautiful spider lily, or Peruvian daffodil, *Hymenocallis* spp. There are species native to both North and South America. Many *hymenocallis*, such as the truly Peruvian *H. narcissiflora*, are deciduous and need a dormant resting period in winter. Others, such as *H. caribaea*, *H. speciosa*, *H. littoralis*, and 'Variegata', its handsome cultivar with bright green leaves striped and edged with white, are from warmer climates and are evergreen. All have large, sweetly fragrant flowers, and a variation on the theme of a cuplike center and six narrow petals. Some have bold cups and curled petals, other species have much-reduced cups and elongated, narrow, spiderlike petals. Provide spider lilies a site with well-drained soil. Those species that go dormant can tolerate full sun, while evergreen species (less common in the trade) prefer filtered sunlight, especially at midday. Handle spiderlilies as you would hybrid amaryllis: once in growth, give them ample water and regular applications of liquid fertilizer after their flowers fade. Sort potted bulbs "as is," keeping deciduous ones dry after their leaves wither and evergreen species barely moist



while they are resting. Popular, free-flowering, readily available selections include pure white with yellow stripes 'Advance', fragrant white *H. xfestalis* and large-white, scalloped cupped 'Zwanenburg', as well as soft yellow 'Sulphur Queen'. **H**

—Judy Glattstein is an enthusiastic gardener who needs more time in her garden to counterbalance time spent writing and lecturing.

Sources

Brent and Becky's Bulbs
7900 Daffodil Lane
Gloucester, VA 23061
www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com
877-661-2852

Seneca Hill Perennials
3712 County Route 57
Oswego, NY 13126
www.senecahillperennials.com
315-342-5915

Collectors Nursery
16804 NE 102nd Avenue
Battle Ground, WA 98604
www.collectorsnursery.com
360-574-3832