GARDENS IN BLOOM

(week of April 11, 2021)

Expanding its horticulture, environmental education and conservation mission, **GARDENS IN BLOOM**, each week spotlights a featured tropical and native plant—to enjoy on a visit this week!

LAELIA 'NEMESIS' ORCHID *(Laelia X 'Nemisis')*

Laelia 'Nemesis' Orchid is a hybrid of two Mexican species, *Laelia superbiens* and *Laelia anceps*. This combination produced a showy, vigorously-growing, head-turning hybrid with clusters of pink lavender-tinged flowers, magenta-purple lips, and bright yellow throats on 18-24 inch stalks standing well above the leaves. Bright, indirect light yields an impressive specimen in a relatively short time frame. Growers also note it is more tolerant of temperature extremes than many other orchid species--a good option to grow outdoors much of the year, with protection from wind and direct sun.

See Laelia 'Nemesis' Orchid in the Samuel Jones Orchid Conservatory.

ANACONCHO ORCHID TREE *(Bauhinia lunaroides - formerly B. congesta)*

Anaconcho Orchid Tree, or *Chihuahua Orchid Tree*, is a West-Central Texas native shrub ranging into northern Mexico. It's a compact grower with considerably smaller flowers than its cousins the *Hong Kong Orchid Tree* (*B. purpurea*), or the South Texas native *Mexican Orchid Tree* (*B. mexicana*). Identified as a Zone 8 plant, root hardy to 10-20ºF, it also is more freeze tolerant than its cousins. It surprisingly is a member of the Pea (*Fabaceae*) Family, more evident after producing seed pods post-pollination!

Although it can be trimmed into a small ornamental tree, it naturally produces multiple trunks creating a shrub 6-12 feet tall and 6-10 feet wide. Clusters of white or pink flowers bloom 2 or 3 times a year for a month each. Leaves are round, double-lobed, or cloven-hoof shape, but typically only 1-1.5 inches across. It grows well in alkaline soils but requires good drainage.

See two Anaconcho Orchid Trees currently blooming in the Butterfly Garden, providing nectar for butterflies!