

## GARDENS IN BLOOM

(week of Dec 6, 2020)

The South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center currently cannot offer Saturday classes, weekend Rep-Tales and Parrot Talk, or Orchid-ology series, due to COVID-19 protocol, plus health and safety of guests. Fulfilling its horticulture, environmental education and conservation mission, **WHAT'S BLOOMING**, each week spotlights a featured tropical and native plant—to enjoy on a visit this week, or enhance your landscape!

### BRASSANTHE X 'MAIKAI MAYUMI' ORCHID

*Brassanthe Maikai*, an orchid hybrid originated by Hirose in 1944, is a cross of *B. nodosa* x *Gur. bowringiana*, considered a "primary hybrid" since a cross between two species. There are multiple varieties of this cross including the featured "Maikai Mayumi", the most awarded form, recognized 12 times between 1987 and 2014. It's light lavender flowers with purple speckles are about 2 inches wide. Flower stems can produce 6-8 flowers in clusters, with mature plants reaching up to 12-18 inches tall in bloom.

**See both potted and mounted specimens of this beautiful orchid now blooming in the Samuel Jones Orchid Conservatory.**



### CHILE PEQUIN (*Capiscum annuum*)

This week's native plant is known for fruit color, not its flower! Chile Pequin, also called "bird pepper" or "turkey pepper," is a native hot pepper naturally found along the Eastern U.S. seaboard, Maryland to Florida, west to Arizona and Utah, and south into Central America. It is a critical fall and winter food source for birds which digest the hot fruit, then deposit seeds in nearby locations.

Plants typically remain evergreen in our area, but are deciduous in colder locations. Compact plants grow 1-3 feet tall with 1-inch spade-shaped bright green leaves. The plant forms individual tiny flowers, a fourth to half-inch wide, which form the half-inch round or slightly-elongated peppers, which turn red when mature.

Plants prefer moist soil, but survive drier conditions once established. Chile Pequins grows in a wide range of soils, including clay, sand, loams and caliche mixes, but good drainage is necessary.

Pequins are very hot having high concentrations of capsaicinoids, rated at 30,000-50,000 scoville units, 5-8 times hotter than jalapeno peppers! Wash your hands after picking, and avoid rubbing your eyes to prevent severe burning and irritation.

**See Chile Pequins on Butterfly Hill, and along the Brennecke Nature Trail.**

