

GARDENS IN BLOOM

(week of Feb. 28, 2021)

The South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center currently offers limited classes, and no weekend Rep-Tales and Parrot Talk, due to COVID-19 protocol, health and safety of guests. Fulfilling 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!

CATTLIANTHE x 'GOLD DIGGER'

Cattlianthe 'Gold Digger' is an orchid hybrid originated by Mr. and Mrs. W. O'Dell, in 1974; and is a cross of Ctt. 'Red Gold' and Ctt. 'Warpaint'. It is recognized by clusters of 4 to 8 medium-sized golden blossoms, about two inches across, with a maroon speckled throat.

It's a striking contrast to multiple purple and lavender orchid blooms in many collections. Coming soon are many Phalaenopsis and Dendrobium now in full spike and bud.

See potted specimens of this beautiful orchid and several others blooming now in the Samuel Jones Orchid Conservatory.



JUMPING CACTUS (*Cylindropuntia leptocaulis*), formerly (*Opuntia leptocaulis*)

We are featuring Jumping Cactus because it appears untouched after our 18°F freeze last week! A true cactus in the family *Cactaceae*, it naturally is found in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona and adjacent Mexico. Its other common names include *tasajillo*, *desert Christmas cactus* and *Christmas cholla*.

Plants typically grow 2-5 feet tall with narrow, pencil-shaped segmented stems that quickly detach, allowing them to propagate, spread and establish new plants. Stems begin dark green, but turn lighter green or tan with age. Insignificant yellow/green flowers appear April through summer, forming small red fruit if pollinated. New growth has small succulent tree leaves that look like small thick triangles near the stem, all of which fall off in early spring.

Jumping Cactus has two sizes of spines (often misidentified as thorns). The longer spines are .5-1.5 inches long, surrounded by smaller hairline-spines about .3 inches long. The spines allow stem segments to attach or "jump" onto animal fur and clothing for distribution and "travel" to other areas.

See Jumping Cactus in several locations along the Brennecke Nature Trail with several specimens on the incline approaching the Freshwater Wetland Nursery Bridge, and Bird Tower.

