

WHAT'S BLOOMING?

(week of October 4, 2020)

The South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center currently cannot offer Saturday morning classes, weekend Rep-Tales and Parrot Talk, or Orchid-ology series, due to State of Texas COVID-19 protocols, as well as health and safety of our guests.

Carrying out its horticulture, environmental education and conservation mission, the Botanical Gardens brings us **WHAT'S BLOOMING**, each week spotlighting a featured blooming plant in the Exhibit Area; and native in or near the Habitat and Trails area—to enjoy on a visit this week, and even consider for your landscape!

SUSAN FENDER NEWBERRY ORCHID

(*Rhyncholaeliocattleya*)

Susan Fender Newberry, a showy hybrid orchid introduced in 1992, was a cross between *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* Caesar's Head × *Cattleya* Mary Ellen Carter. It produces unique large five-inch golden-orange blossoms, with deep maroon-purple throat and highlights on two of the petals—a definite stand-out among purples, pinks and whites dominating most orchid collections.

Cattleya orchids and their *Rhyncholaeliocattleya* cousins are fairly easy to grow, producing clusters of pseudo-bulbs which the average person considers leaves. These plants flower only once on each pseudo-bulb, with many types here blooming early fall. The Samuel Jones Orchid Conservatory *cattleya* collection began blooming a bit earlier than normal this season. Orchid blossoms often last several weeks if conditions remain cool with plants properly watered.

See in the Orchid Conservatory.



CORAL VINE (*Antigonon leptopus*)

Coral Vine, also known as "Queen's Wreath" or "Chain of Love," produces striking fuchsia blossoms and bright green heart-shaped four-inch leaves from July or August through first freeze. The stunning pink blossoms actually are modified leaves called bracts, which hold color longer for pollinators. Bracts only are about one-half inch across, but produced in large numbers in clusters on the ends of vines, resulting in lots of bright pink color. The natural twisting nature of this vine allows it to wrap around arbors, fences and poles for support, with mature plants vining up to 40-50 feet long in our area.

The South Texas/Mexico native Zone 9 plant freezes back to the base if grown further north, but vigorously regrows 8-12 feet or more in a year. Leaves die due to cold which may leave brown stems leaves for winter. Annual cutbacks to main stems are common for landscape uses.

Coral Vine are good nectar plants, attracting plentiful hummingbirds during fall migration. When hummers pollinate the flowers, seeds may fall producing a few volunteer seedlings the next year.

At the Botanical Gardens, see Coral Vine on parking lot fences, and in the Hummingbird Garden.

