

What is Blooming Now?

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In the sunny part of the flower garden the winter snapdragons are still blooming, while naturalized and planted zinnias are also blooming. The snapdragons will decline this month from the heat or a fungal rust. Pull them out then. Cora vinca is doing well. Use the Cora selection because it is aerial phytophthora resistant. Naturalized larkspurs are declining but still show some color. Spread the range of your naturalized larkspur by distributing the seed pods to other sites when they (the pods) brown.

In the shade garden, pentas have red, white, pink or lavender flowers. They look great in containers and bring the butterflies and hummingbirds to your patio. Begonias have prospered in the mild spring weather. Both the popular semperflorens variety and their bigger cousins the "Whopper" are very showy. One "Whopper" plant will fill up a half whiskey barrel with shiny green or bronze leaves and red or pink blooms all summer.

The bluebonnets, poppies, and blue curl are nearing the end of their bloom period but the coreopsis and Indian blankets are still blooming strongly. The bee balm and *Salvia coccinea* are just beginning their bloom period. Remember that the wildflowers need to be allowed to mature and drop their seed if you want flowers again next spring. *Salvia coccinea* and blue curl (*Phacelia*) do well in the shade.

One of the most noticeable blooming plants is the Mexican olive (*Cordia boissieri*). It is really not an olive but the fruit produced resembles an olive and the foliage has a silver green look even though the leaves are large and fuzzy. The Mexican olive forms an attractive round crown that may reach 30 feet tall. The flowers look like a white hollyhock. As attractive as the Mexican olive is, transplants can be hard to find because it is not showy in a container. Watch for it at your favorite retail nursery and at specialty plant sales.

Pomegranates are still blooming. They are the dense shrubs with the "glow in the dark" orange flowers. Deer do not eat pomegranate in my neighborhood and they are easy to find at area nurseries.

Also on the deer proof list the salvias are blooming in area landscapes. *Salvia greggii*, also called autumn sage has, red, pink or white blooms on woody stems. They do not die back in the winter like the blue summer salvias and often bloom far into the fall. There is a large variety of mealy blue sage selections. Some like the Indigo Spires grow to six feet tall and 8 feet around. Others like the Victoria Blue are disciplined soldiers that grow upright to 12 inches tall. Hummingbirds and butterflies like salvias as a nectar source.

New Gold lantana has begun blooming in recent weeks. It will continue blooming in cycles all summer. The plant has a spreading growth habit that can cover lots of ground (a mound 2 feet tall and 8 feet around). It is not eaten by the deer and like the more upright lantanas it is a source of nectar for butterflies and hummingbirds. New Gold lantana is pretty invincible in terms of drought but it is attacked by lace bugs some summers. The leaves fade and look dusty and the plant stops blooming for several months. Lace bug damage can be prevented with an acephate spray once per month beginning in May. Some gardeners have also had success with spinosad sprays applied every 3 weeks.

For gardeners interested in learning more about attracting butterflies to your landscape, join me today at the grand opening of the Certified Butterfly Garden at Milbergers(Loop 1604 and Bulverde). I will be available between 11am and 3pm to answer your questions.