

# BLUEBONNET HERB FARM

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## **Dear Gardening Friends,**

Spring is finally here! We have been blessed with some rain, so everything should soon be greening up nicely. All of the roadsides are decorated with a beautiful array of colors from the seasonal wildflowers. Petunias and lilies are in bloom. Fresh shipments of herbs, annuals, and perennials are here and we have been busy planting and fertilizing. Well its time to get busy in our yards, so here's what needs to be done.

## **Gardening Tips**

April is a good time to prune azaleas, after they have finished blooming. Do not wait till summer to prune because you will cut off most of next years flowers. In late April spray for insect control and disease prevention. Fertilize azaleas again if needed. Bulbs should be fertilized with bone meal after flowering. Allowing the foliage on spring bloomers to die on the plant will feed the bulb. When cutting back gladiolas leave at least four leaves on the lower part of the stem. Lilies like you to leave about ¼ of the stem to help the bulb mature. Camellias need the soil acidity tested and they need to be pruned. To grow healthy plants you only need 3 things: Phosphorous for root, fruit and blooms, nitrogen for leaf and stem and potash for protection, and vigor.

In April many herbs can be put out such as Italian parsley, coriander, chamomile, basil, lemon balm, mint, thyme, rosemary, and sage. Mulching your beds with 2-4" of mulch will deter weeds and help keep the beds from drying out so quickly. Prune bridal wreath, weigela, flowering quince, and other flowering trees and shrubs after blooming. Spray roses for black spot.

May is time to prune spring bloomers such as azaleas, camellias, bridal wreath, flowering quince, wisteria and redbuds. Delaying pruning may take off new buds for the next blooming season. When caring for newly planted trees, keep the soil moist without over watering. Watch for black spot on roses. Use a fungicide for managing this disease. Having a beautiful lawn requires three things. Mowing every 5 to 7 days, fertilizing in moderation and soaking your yard about once a week to once a month, depending on how hot it is. Overwatering makes for a shallow root system. Sandy soils will require water more often.

## **Butterfly Gardening**

Every garden can be so much richer by the butterflies that decorate it. Here are a few basic tips on how to attract butterflies to your garden. Now every gardener can enjoy a glittering array of nature's jewelry in their own backyard.

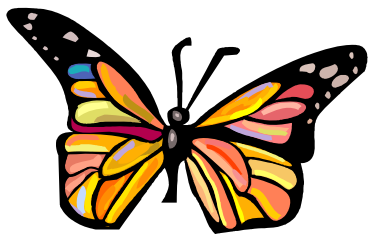
## **BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR ATTRACTING BUTTERFLIES**

### **Grow Lots of Nectar plants:**

Black-eyed Susan, Coreopsis, Pentas, Asters, butterfly weed, purple coneflower, butterfly bush and other flowering plants. Butterflies usually chooses the plant that is most abundant, also by planting in clumps more butterflies can feed at the same time. Try to plant plants of different heights to attract smaller species of butterflies that stay lower to the ground.

### **Grow Caterpillar Food Plants:**

Fennel, Parsley, Marigolds, Grasses, clover, Asters, Oak, Elm are just some of the food plants. Many Plants that caterpillars eat are wild flowers, weeds, and Grasses. If you want a large population of butterflies provide food for Caterpillars, by planting caterpillar food plants. You will attract egg-laying female butterflies to your garden.



### **Provide Food, Water, And Shelter:**

Butterflies may also feast on sap from trees as well as rotten or overripe fruit. Also be sure to provide mineral water. You can make your own by adding sand or gravel to water. Stale soda is a nice treat for butterflies as well. Just like anything else Butterflies need shelter. Some may latch themselves onto a structure when the weather is too harsh for them to be out in. If a structure is unavailable, try planting plants with large foliage so that butterflies can attach themselves to the undersides of the leaves. Then they can be protected from rain, cool weather, and strong winds.

### **Choose a Sunny Location:**

Since Butterflies are cold-blooded they are limited to what they can do in a day's time. Butterflies need the sun to keep their bodies warm enough to fly. In order for a butterfly to fly well their body temperature must be approximately 85-100 degrees F. Butterflies will bask in the sun until they are warm enough to fly. However if you provide a sunny location that suits all of their needs, it will benefit both you and the butterflies. By being able to fly longer butterflies have more time to find food, mates, and they can lay eggs. Thus your garden gets pollinated by loads of butterflies.

### **Herb of the Month "Peppermint"**

Peppermint is an herb that grows to 1-3 feet tall. Like other varieties of mint, it can be very aggressive. It will easily take over your garden if given the opportunity. It's best to grow it in a container. Peppermint is highly aromatic. Peppermint's Aromatic properties help relieve a stuffy nose and break up congestion. Taking 3 deep breaths of peppermint oil can relieve headaches immediately. Peppermint is valuable for a wide variety of medicinal uses: relieves digestive problems, soothes muscles and the lining of the colon, and relieves headaches and colds. When taken internally peppermint may relive pain of both chronic and acute inflammations in the intestinal walls and relieve diarrhea, gas, and nausea. Peppermint may also counteract nerve pain, migraine, and inflammation in the gums. Despite peppermints vast uses medicinally, it has culinary uses as well. Peppermint is most commonly found in teas, candies, and is used as a garnish. Try this delicious recipe and see for yourself.

## Peppermint Patty Chocolate Cake

Servings/Makes: 16 Ready In: 1-2 Hours

Ingredients:

**CAKE:** 1 package (1 lb 2.25oz) devils food cake mix, such as Duncan Hines

2 cups sour cream

2/3 cup oil, preferably canola

3 eggs

2 tablespoons peppermint liqueur, such as

Peppermint Schnapps, or water

1 cup mini semisweet chocolate chips

**FILLING & FROSTING:** 6 tablespoons butter or margarine, at room temperature

2 cups confectioners' sugar

1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract

2 cans (16 oz ea) milk chocolate frosting.

Mini chocolate covered peppermint cream candies, such as Peppermint Patties, quartered, optional

**Directions: CAKE:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour 2-8 inch round cake pans. In bowl at low speed, beat cake mix with sour cream, oil, eggs and liqueur until just combined, about 1 minute. Increase speed to medium, beat until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Stir in chocolate chips. Divide batter between pans. Bake 30-35 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool on racks 10 minutes remove from pans; cool completely.

**FILLING:** In bowl with mixer on medium speed beat batter until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add sugar, 2 Tbsp water and peppermint extract. Beat until fluffy, about 2 minutes; refrigerate until ready to use. **ASSEMBLY:** Place 1 cake layer on serving plate; spread filling over cake to within 1/2 inch of edges. Top with remaining cake layer. Spread top and side with frosting. Garnish with peppermint candies, if desired.

Recipe provided by:

<http://www.cdkitchen.com>

## EVERYONE MARK YOUR CALENDERS FOR April 14<sup>TH</sup>.

That is when the GARDEN CAFÉ will be having their GRAND OPENING. We hope that you will join us for lunch and Friday night dinners. Lunches will be served

Tuesday thru Saturday

11:00am-2:00pm –

Friday night dinner

5:00pm-9:00pm

We have an exciting menu that will be sure to please. A variety of sandwiches such as: grilled chicken, hand pressed hamburgers, panninis, Monte Cristos, and homemade pimento cheese. Soup and Salads will also be available along with homemade desserts.

All of our sandwiches will be served on fresh, homemade bread. Friday nights we will be serving specialty entrees. Come enjoy indoor and outdoor dining. We hope to see you soon so bring your appetite!

## Deer Resistant Plants

Are you tired of deer eating all of your precious plants? Here's a list of some deer resistant plants that you can enjoy with out any worry: yarrow, chives, butterfly weed, butterfly bush, cornflower, shasta daisy, coreopsis, bleeding heart, purple coneflower, mint, bee balm, oregano, primrose, sage, lamb's ear, vinca, barberry, English hawthorn, beautybush, snapdragon, foxglove, morning glory, lobelia, four o' clock, forget me not, sweet basil, geranium, parsley, blue salvia, dusty miller, marigold, and verbena. They do not care for the aroma of most herbs.

## Store Hours

Monday thru Saturday

9am-5pm

Contact us at:

[bluebonnetherbfarm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bluebonnetherbfarm@sbcglobal.net)