

Joan Sargent's Summer Survivors

SEPT. 1995 by Joan Sargent

My garden was neglected this summer-- no care and no water.

Ignoring the parched and repoachful shrubs and perennials. I came home and fastened my eyes on what looked unperturbed by this brutal summer. Two under-used shrubs were blooming their heads off, Vitex agnus castus [aka Chaste Tree] with its violet panicles and fragrant foliage, and Indigofera gerardiana with mimosa-like foliage and rose-purple pea-like flowers. These are borderline hardy--do not cut them down until spring. My two favorite hybrid Buddlejas are Lochinch and Dartmoor. The Lochinch, silver-foliaged mauve flower with orange eye, and darker Dartmoor with showy long branching spikes were covered with bloom, butterflies and bees. Heliotrope did well; unfortunately the seed-raised strains are not fragrant.

Campanula lactiflora, [aka Milky Bellflower] cut back after its first bloom in June was back, shorter, but covered in milky blue flowers; Nierembergia Purple Robe treated the same way, looked fine. Most established ornamental grasses are drought resistant, but the spring-planted divisions are thirsty. Even Phlox and perennial Lobelia, well-mulched with cow manure, came through looking colorful and presentable. A list of what did not look prosperous might be longer, but more than likely after a cut-back and fall rains, most of these will be back next year (I hope).

ED- photo of Indigofera appeared in Sept. '13 newsletter.

Joan Sargent, a longtime member and master gardener who passed away in August 2012; wrote many gardening columns through the years for our newsletter. We are reprinting them again.



first row L to R:

Vitex agnus castus, a tall shrub. Long branches of the Dartmoor Buddleja.

second row:

Dartmoor Buddleja up close. The purple Buddleja Lochinch, with orange eyes.

third row:

Heliotrope, in dark purple. Nierembergia Purple Robe, drought tolerant annual -sow seeds in spring.

Left: Lobelia, an annual, will grow easily, prefers cool and will flower till frost.