

Otus the Head Cat

Tax procrastinators get extra three days.
PAGE 2D

STYLE

D

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Copyright © 2017, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Inc.

ARKANSAS ONLINE www.arkansasonline.com

SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 2017

Treasure hunt



This lamp was once a vase/ewer, but it was converted.

HELAINE FENDELMAN
AND JOE ROSSON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

DEAR HELAINE AND JOE:

I live in Cape Town, South Africa, and I am sending you photographs of a lamp that once belonged to my late parents. I have also enclosed a photograph of the mark. I would like to know where it came from and its value.

— B.S.

DEAR B.S.: This is truly an international query. The letter comes from South Africa, the image on the lamp is based on Spanish fiction and the piece itself was made in Bohemia (once a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, then Czechoslovakia, and now the Czech Republic).

The image on the piece is that of Don Quixote de la Mancha, the title character in the novel written by Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616). Part one of the novel was first published in 1605 and part two in 1615. It is one of the most influential works of fiction in Western literature, and Schopenhauer called it one of the four greatest novels ever written.

On the object belonging to B.S. we see the image of Don Quixote mounted on his nag, "Rocinante." He is holding a lance and dressed in an old suit of armor. Looking at the piece, we feel the image may have been created using sgraffito, or the incising of a design into clay with a sharp instrument.

The oval mark has the place name "Czechoslovakia" on it, which did not formally exist until 1918. The firm that made it was the Amphora Porcelain Works, located in the Turn-Teplitz area of Bohemia (modern-day Trnovany, Czech Republic).

The manufacturer marked their wares "Amphora," but the piece was made in the factory owned by Riessner, Stellmacher and Kessel, which was founded in 1892 and remained in business until 1945. They are known for their art nouveau- and art deco-style wares. Sometimes

See **TREASURE**
on Page 3D

Local stars



"Vista Bubblegum" petunias



Three more ornamentals added to Arkansas Diamonds list

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY JANET B. CARSON
SPECIAL TO THE DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Savvy gardeners know to look for the blue diamond logo when picking out annual flowers for their garden. This logo identifies the Arkansas Diamonds — good annuals for your garden that have been produced by Arkansas growers.

The Arkansas Diamonds program is a partnership with the Arkansas Green Industry Association, the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service, area growers and more than 30 independent garden centers. The goal of the program is to educate gardeners about annual ornamental plants that consistently perform well in our state.

This is Year 3 for the program, and three more plants have been added, bringing the list of endorsed plants to 12.

The choices for 2017 are the "Big/Whopper" series of begonia, "White Christmas" caladium and "Vista Bubblegum" petunia.

BIG IS BEAUTIFUL

Begonias are great plants for our gardens. The new Diamond begonia is called "Big" or "Whopper" depending upon the grower. They are basically the same variety with different names.

These plants come in pink or red with either green or bronze foliage. They will do well in full sun to partial shade.

They do get large, growing up to more than 3 feet tall with a 2- to 3-foot spread. They rival a dragonwing begonia for size.

There are no pest problems, but as with any begonia, they prefer well-drained soil.

SHADE LOVER

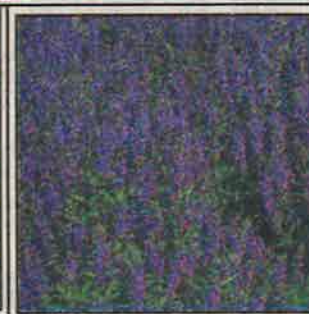
"White Christmas" caladiums have been on the market



"Big/Whopper" begonias



"White Christmas" caladiums



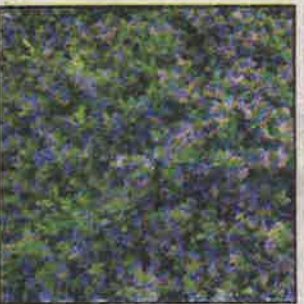
Purple angelonia



"Sriracha Pink" cuphea



"Velvet Elvis" plectranthus



Blue scaevola



"Redhead" coleus



Red dragonweed begonia



Yellow lantana



"Graffiti Red" pentas



"Cora Cascade Polka Dot" vinca

See **DIAMONDS**
on Page 6D

Tools & toys

Orange Screw

What's to love: Lightweight rust-proof anchors made in the United States, effective for securing tents, awnings, sunshades, trampolines and other outdoor items.

What does it do: The Orange Screw, literally large orange screws made of recycled polycarbonate, come in two sizes. The small is 9.5 inches long. A tester, who used it on a recent overnight trip on the Buffalo River, said it worked great

Fiskars Billhook Saw

What's to love: A versatile tool for clearing the yard or garden of vines, branches and other vegetation.

What does it do: The 9-inch blade made of rust-resistant hardened steel is curved, which allows for cutting when pull-



Personal space

Mae L. Isom

Where I live: near Central High School in Little Rock

Occupation: Nursing. I ended my career in 2006 when I retired as an emergency room nurse from the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock, where I worked for 31 years. I decided to retire when my grandson was born so that I could look after him. I was 65

eras that I touched up or renovated. It's a pleasant place with many windows.

Why? It's a quiet space where I can study my Sunday School lessons, relax or pray. My home is on a busy street and the location of this room means the traffic noises aren't as loud. Because it is quieter here than other parts of my home, I can concentrate on my lessons. I feel comfort-



"Vista Bubblegum" petunias spread 36 inches, making an impressive show in hanging baskets.

Diamonds

• Continued from Page 1D

for quite a while, but they are a tough caladium that won't stop all summer.

This caladium will brighten a dark, shady spot in the landscape. It will grow in partial sun to deep shade, bearing pure white leaves with green veins.

It grows 12 to 24 inches tall.

Bulbs can be lifted in the fall to replant next season, or you could buy new bulbs every year. (Don't be too quick to plant caladiums in the spring as they like warm soil to get growing.)

PRETTY IN PINK

"Vista Bubblegum" petunia is a beautiful bubblegum pink on a plant that just won't stop blooming — all summer long.

They typically grow 12 to 18 inches tall with up to a 36-inch spread. "Vista Bubblegum" can do well in the ground, in containers or in hanging baskets.

As with most petunias, they will bloom best if given frequent fertilizer, but "Vista Bubblegum" is not as demanding as some of the other varieties. It grows best in full sun with average water and fertilization.

SPARKLERS

With these additions there are now 12 Arkansas Diamonds, all worth planting in your garden. As a refresher on past choices, they are:

From 2016, two sun lovers — "Graffiti Red" pentas and



"White Christmas" and other caladiums brighten a shady landscape.

"Sriracha Pink" cuphea — and the shade-loving "Velvet Elvis" plectranthus.

From 2015, red dragonwing begonia, purple angelonia, "Cora Cascade Polka Dot" vinca, "Redhead" coleus, blue scaevola and gold/yellow lantana.

Here is a quick recap of

their attributes:

■ "Graffiti Red" is a newer, compact pentas with bright red flowers that grows up to 10 inches tall. It has a very uniform growth habit, and rarely needs pinching. It will do well in containers or mass-planted in the ground. It needs a minimum of six hours



"Big/Whopper" series red begonias aren't shy plants, even in containers.

of sun, but will take more.

As with most annual plants, regular fertilizer will keep it blooming at peak performance. While not water-needy, regular watering will keep it looking its best. This plant is a favorite of butterflies and hummingbirds.

■ Cuphea "Sriracha Pink" has almost quarter-size blossoms, creating a more dramatic display of color than many cupheas. Like the spicy chili sauce for which it is named, "Sriracha Pink" adds a lot of color with large, wide-open pink blooms from late spring through fall. The hotter it gets, the better it performs.

The plant grows 24 to 30 inches tall and wide and works well in containers or planted in the ground. Once established, it is very drought tolerant.

■ "Velvet Elvis" plectranthus has deep green leaves with a deep purple shade underneath, but it also has beautiful purple blooms which open all summer through fall in light shade. The plant has an upright growth habit, maturing at 18 to 24 inches tall and wide. It is great in containers or in mass plantings in the shade garden.

■ Red dragonwing begonia is a reliable all-season bloomer. This plant does best in full morning sun with protection from the hot afternoon sun, or in filtered sunlight. Give it room to grow since it does get 2 to 3 feet tall — and wide — by the end of the growing season.

■ Angelonia or summer snapdragon is another great summer performer in full sun to partial shade. These spike-forming blooms will continue all summer provided they get regular fertilizer. It is very heat and drought tolerant but will bloom best if given supplemental irrigation in dry weather.

Mature size will vary by variety, but they have a range between 1 and 3 feet tall and a spread of 6 to 12 inches.

■ "Cora Cascade Polka Dot" vinca is an annual periwinkle. While it only grows 6 to 8 inches high, "Cascade" spreads 32 to 36 inches wide, flowering from frost to frost. The blooms are very evenly distributed, eliminating the "bald spots" that diminish some vinca.

Large white to pale pink flowers with a red center bloom on a plant with glossy, dense, green foliage. This plant thrives in full sun and is quite drought tolerant. This series is also very disease resistant.

■ "Redhead" coleus is as deep a red as any of the coleus plants on the market. Although it will grow in full sun, it would benefit from a bit of shade in the hottest part of the day — unless you can keep it well watered. It also will do well in partial shade. The mature plant can be 2 feet tall and wide.

■ Blue scaevola or fan flower is another full-sun bedding plant that will tolerate partial shade. The fan-shaped flow-

ers are produced all season on low, spreading plants. It is heat and drought tolerant. The plant grows 8 to 10 inches tall with a spread of 12 to 24 inches, depending on variety. ■ Lantanas are one of the most heat-tolerant bedding plants we have for Arkansas gardens. In southern Arkansas, these plants are perennials, but in central Arkansas they are hit and miss, and in the northern tier, they are annuals.

Size can vary tremendously by variety, but they all thrive in full sun and warm conditions. Although they often can survive on their own, in the hottest, driest months, a little extra water is appreciated.

While you might find these same varieties for sale without the Arkansas Diamonds logo, those bearing it are guaranteed to come from an Arkansas grower. Also, showing the logo means the retailer belongs to the Arkansas Green Industry Association (formerly the Arkansas Nurserymen), the trade association that sponsors the Diamonds.

By encouraging shoppers to look for the logo, the program promotes reliable plants, local growers and independent garden centers.

A list of participating retailers and more about the program is online at argia.org.

Janet B. Carson is a horticulture specialist for the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

Feel free to clutter your creative space

KATHERINE ROTH
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spaces where creativity happens are utterly unlike other rooms, artists and designers say. Whether at home or elsewhere, these deeply personal spaces often feel like they're in flux, with interiors more "curated" than decorated. They often feature natural objects and personal totems. They can feel messy, but also like a window into an artist's mind.

"I am always mesmerized by what goes on in these creative spaces. They are very special and often very private. The hardest part is convincing people to let you in," says Paul Barbera, who has photographed more than 200 studios of established and up-and-coming designers, architects and artists around the world. His most recent book is *Where They Create, Japan* (Frame Publishers, Amsterdam).

Matthew Waldman, founder of a watch company called Nooka, is one of the designers



AP/LOUESA ROEBUCK

Artist Louesa Roebuck's work studio in Ojai, Calif., includes some of her monotype studies, along with pieces by friends and peach blossoms.

"My home is very pared down but the desk in my studio area is covered in things," Lonsdale says. "The most creative spaces seem to have the messiest desks. I love those desks. And many creative people spread things out across walls or floors. It's a way to visualize. It's work in progress."

a bulletin board or gallery ledges so you can refresh what kind of work you have up depending on the projects you're working on."

LET NATURE IN

Natural light and natural objects "connect us to the universe and stimulate the brain. If there's no out-

Moles chew gum and die? Expert busts garden myths

MARY BETH BRECKENRIDGE
AKRON BEACON JOURNAL (TNS)

Years ago my father-in-law kept a stash of Juicy Fruit in his underwear drawer so he could roll up the sticks of gum and poke them into mole holes in his backyard.

He'd heard the trick would kill the pesky critters, apparently from a buildup of undigested gum. But all he got out of his efforts was fruity-smelling underwear.

That's because the Juicy Fruit ploy, like many folksy lawn and garden remedies, is pure hooey. And Eric Barrett, an educator with the Ohio State University Extension's Mahoning County office, is out to set the record straight.

Barrett recently busted a few widely held gardening myths during the Saturday Gardening Series, an educational program organized by the Summit County Master Gardeners.

ter for too long.

That can happen even when the soil has plenty of calcium in it, be it from eggshells or any other source.

The best way to prevent blossom end rot is to make sure tomato plants get a consistent and adequate supply of water, Barrett said. An Ohio State fact sheet recommends 1 to 1½ inches of water a week.

Myth: Epsom salts are a cure-all for countless garden problems.

Fact: This is a case where too much of a good thing can be bad.

Epsom salts are magnesium sulfate, so they add magnesium — an important plant nutrient — to the soil.

The problem is many gardeners use Epsom salts indiscriminately, which can cause too much magnesium to build up in the soil. That can prevent plants from taking up other nu-

use a floral preservative, but it's more important to sanitize the vase, recut the stems, remove any leaves that fall below the waterline and check the water level daily.

Myth: Peonies need ants on them to bloom properly.

Fact: The presence of ants has nothing to do with successful blooming, Barrett said.

The reason ants often congregate on peonies is they're attracted to the sugary liquid secreted by the flower buds.

Myth: Putting gravel in the bottom of flowerpots improves drainage.

Fact: Surprisingly, research shows this common practice doesn't help and might actually slow water flow, Barrett said.

A better strategy, he said, is to use a soilless potting mix instead of a mix containing soil, and to make sure the container has drainage holes.

So if these widely held gar-