

Happy March to all you gardening buffs. Hopefully the weather has settled, and it's time to get your gardens ready for a new growing season. Did you lose plants because of the severe winter? Does spring always give you the urge to add something new and different to your plantings? Be sure to check out the **Spring Break Plant Sale** at the San Antonio Botanical Garden. The sale runs from Monday, Mar. 10, through Friday, Mar. 14, from 10am to 2pm daily. Admission to the sale is free with paid admission to the Garden.

As always, we're offering a wide variety of watersavers, natives, and cold tolerant species, both old favorites and new varieties. Mary Irish and her team of greenhouse volunteers will be happy to help you make great selections for your garden. This sale is featuring four excellent perennials: **cardinal bird, African hosta, sotol, and eyelash sage.**

CARDINAL BIRD (*Euphorbia tithymaloides*), variegated form:

This succulent is a watersaver which prefers partial or full shade. It blooms in summer, with numerous thin stems holding the complex, bird-shaped, red flowers. It reaches a size of 2 to 6 feet tall by 2 to four feet wide. Cardinal bird makes a great splash of color in a shady bed, particularly one with dry shade. It is also effective in large containers. Prune it in summer to keep it tidy or reduce its size. Use gloves and protect eyes when pruning; the sap is a strong skin irritant.



AFRICAN HOSTA (*Drimiopsis maculata*): This bulb performs best in partial shade. The plant remains low—6 to 12 inches tall—and compact—3 to 6 inches wide. It blooms from late spring through early summer with small cream-colored flowers on stalks that rise above the mottled foliage. Plant in mass in dry shade for a short groundcover. It also does well in pots. Reduce watering during the coldest part of the winter and the hottest part of the summer. This hosta is drought tolerant, but requires excellent drainage.

SOTOL (*Dasyliirion texanum*): This tough perennial is a native to Texas, and like most natives, a great watersaver. It is extremely heat, drought, and cold tolerant. Sotol blooms from spring to summer with tall, congested spikes of minute creamy white or green flowers. It can reach a height of 5 feet, and grows about as wide as it is tall. Plant it in full sun. Sotol forms a tight ball of numerous deep green leaves along a short stem. Its leaves have rough to thorned edges, so take care to plant it where that is not a problem. Prune only completely dead leaves, but prune flowering stalks any time. Female plants are attractive to hummingbirds.



EYELASH SAGE (*Salvia blepharophylla*): This perennial in the salvia family prefers full sun or partial shade. It blooms in late spring to fall with vivid red flowers, and is a relatively compact plant, growing 1 to 2 feet tall and about as wide. It has average water requirements but good tolerance for high heat and humidity. It offers some deer resistance and is highly attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds. Use eyelash sage in mixed borders, shade gardens, woodland gardens, or containers.