



Spring Update 2020



The color of our native *Lonicera sempervirens* is typically true to its common name “Coral Honeysuckle.” However, this yellow form, ‘John Clayton’ also puts on a great show.

April 2

Our N. C. Wildlife Resources calendar flags today’s date as “ruby-throated hummingbirds return.” We saw a hummingbird March 29th feeding on the Coral Honeysuckle growing at the corner of our deck. We haven’t seen one since, so perhaps the early hummer was just passing through. However, he may just be busy visiting flowers out in the garden.

With the Coral Honeysuckles, Red Buckeyes, and Azaleas in full bloom, I don’t really expect hummingbirds to visit our feeders. But always eager to see the birds up close and hear them chatter, I hung the feeders up a couple of weeks ago. (continued next page)

2020 Wildflower of the Year



The NC Botanical Garden and the Garden Club of North Carolina have named **Marsh Pink** (*Sabatia angularis*) [2020 Wildflower of the Year](#). Free *Wildflower of the Year* seeds are available to the general public. Details on ordering are available at the NCBG website (Link above).



[Triangle Gardener is now online!](#)

If you didn’t pick up a copy before social distancing rules took effect, you can still read this month’s issue. The full magazine is now online.

You’ll find my article about some native vines well suited for gardens and how to grow them. As always the issue is filled with great information from local garden writers.

If you’re running out of reading material while sheltering at home, check out the archive of articles from past issues. You can search the database by subject or by the [writer’s name](#).

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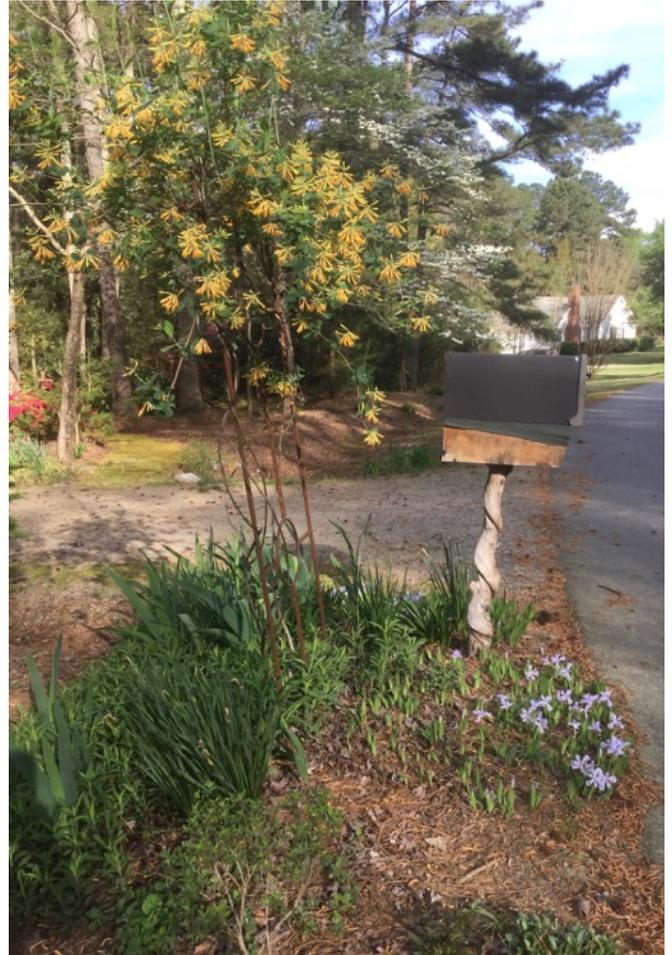
If you’re on Facebook, please check out Gardener by Nature’s page. We occasionally share photos from Swiftbrook and clients’ gardens and post events of interest to gardeners. Our thanks to 194 of you who “like” us.

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TOP LEFT: *Zephyranthes atamasco*, our native Easter lily, is flowering now at [Swift Creek Bluffs Nature Preserve](#).



Dwarf Crested Iris, *Iris cristata*, typically an inhabitant of woodlands with moist, rich soils, has proven to be a durable groundcover in the dry, compacted soil beneath our mailbox.



Whether we're keeping an eye out for hummingbirds or watching the wren tend her nest in the viola pot on the deck, we've never been more grateful to live in a garden that provides food and shelter for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. Along with the hummingbirds, we eagerly await the late-winter song of the White-throated sparrow, the return of our Green Frogs to the edge of the pond in March, and the Anoles who begin to scurry around on the first warm days.

In stressful times, gardens cheer us with their beauty and, more importantly, reassure us with the steadiness of nature's rhythms. As we begin a new gardening year, we are recommitted to helping our clients create sustainable home landscapes that nurture both the human and non-human inhabitants.

Like many other events, our Inviting Native Plants workshop and other scheduled presentations were cancelled this Spring. I'm optimistic my Habitat Gardens presentation scheduled for June with the Gaston County Master Gardeners will go on as planned. We also anticipate having our annual Swiftbrook Gardens Fall Open Day in late September.

Nurseries and garden centers are among those seasonal businesses that will be particularly hard hit by the timing of the pandemic. Many have safety plans in place and are still operating with telephone ordering and curbside pickup available. As we move later into spring, we hope you will support these small local businesses, as well as the produce and plant vendors at area Farmer's Markets.

We are fortunate to have some wonderful public gardens here in the Triangle, including the [NC Botanical Garden](#), [JC Raulston Arboretum](#), and [Sarah P. Duke Gardens](#). All three are closed due to Coronavirus, and all had to cancel important spring fund-raising plant sales. Please plan to visit a garden when they reopen and perhaps consider becoming a member. We'll let you know when their fall plant sales are scheduled.

Enjoy your gardens, take a walk in a park or natural area, and bask in the wonders of spring.

- Dale