



Pategai on Plants

“Compared to gardeners, I think it is generally agreed that others understand very little about anything of consequence.”
— Henry Mitchell

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Smitten By Mona Lavender

I am obsessed. *Plectranthus hybridus* ‘Mona Lavender’ PPAF (Lamiaceae) is one of the most breathtaking plants I have ever seen. Its striking lavender splashed with purple, orchidlike blooms grace our front terrace. It draws numerous gushing comments and questions from passing neighbors. What is that plant? Where can I get one?

The lavender flower spikes rise about 6 inches above the dark green foliage, dark purple stems, and the bonus of dark purple leaf undersides. According to Ball Seed, Mona Lavender flowers under short days and should flower from fall to spring. I know it was blooming in Orlando in August of last year. Mine slowed in May and became a shadow of its former glory. Mona Lavender is listed for partial sun to shade, but ours yellowed in full summer sun.

The upright, well-branched Mona Lavender reaches a height of 12 to 16 inches and tolerates a range of soil moisture levels. Foliage is damaged at 35° to 40°F, while its roots will not survive below 25° to 28°F.

The eye-catching color combination pairs well with a long list of flowering varieties in baskets, mixed containers, or borders. Try Mona Lavender in a window box so that it can be enjoyed from inside, too. I drooled over Mona Lavender for three months, and Kristin was getting jealous. For my sake, I’m glad the blooming peaked.

This highly desirable BallFlora Plant is available as a 1-gallon plant from Shore Acres Nursery Inc. of Orlando (407-273-1922 or shoreacrfl@aol.com) or as rooted and unrooted cuttings from Ball Seed (800-879-2255 or www.ballseed.com). — SGP

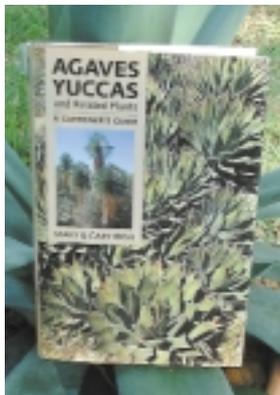


Plectranthus hybridus ‘Mona Lavender’ PPAF

Photos by Stephen G. Pategas/Hortus Oasis

BOOK BIT: Structural Plants Explained

Agaves, Yuccas, and Related Plants: A Gardener’s Guide by Mary and Gary Irish provides information about genera of the Agavaceae families: *Agave*, *Yucca*, *Hesperaloe*, *Furcraea*, *Manfreda*, *Beschorneria*, and *Poliantes*, as well as the Nolinaceae family genera: *Nolina*, *Dasylyrion*, *Beaucarnea*, and *Calibanus*. The century plant and the pony tail palm are just two of the numerous species thoroughly described. Crisp photographs illustrate a number of the species.



A book for structural plants

The strikingly structural looking vegetation of these plants is generally the outstanding characteristic. Many of these plants stay rather small and are drought tolerant. They are useful in containers and mass plantings and as accent plants.

The very readable chapters include ornamental history, ethnobotany, economic and ornamental distribution, planting, frost protection, containers, propagation, and pest, disease, and cultural problems. They are followed by species profiles with keys and a list of plants suitable for humid gardens (from trials in North Carolina at Plant Delights and Texas at Yucca Do).

Agaves, Yuccas, and Related Plants: A Gardener’s Guide, 2000, is 384 pages with 100 color photos, one map, and 18 line drawings. The book is available in 6-inch by 9-inch hard-cover for \$34.95 from Timber Press Inc. at 800-327-5680 or www.timberpress.com. — KGP

PLANT BIT

Chrysanthemum reigns again! Changed to *Dendranthemum* over 35 years ago and never fully accepted by horticulturists, the genus name has been returned to *Chrysanthemum*.

Kristin and Stephen are co-owners of Hortus Oasis in Winter Park, FL, providing garden design and garden photography services. Visit them at www.hortusoasis.com and contact them at garden@hortusoasis.com.