

HARVEY SURVIVORS IN SPOTLIGHT THIS YEAR AT MARCH MART

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MERCER BOTANIC GARDENS

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Harvey flood waters at Mercer Botanic Gardens swelled through the entire garden, tumbling many March Mart-bound plants from the northside greenhouses into the surrounding forest. Here are some that made it through Harvey!



L to r, Zizotes milkweed, frogfruit and swamp lily

TEXAS NATIVES (by Don Dubois)

- ZIZOTES MILKWEEDS (

Asclepias oenotheroides) all survived, even though some were not found until months after the flood. Like many Texas milkweeds, Zizotes' large taproot sees it through extended dry periods. It not only tolerated the wet conditions, it dangled from bushes for more than a month with no attention.

- FROGFRUIT, (*Phyla nodiflora*), a Texan Crescent butterfly host plant, makes a good groundcover. Can be mowed if needed.

Frogfruit and Swamp lily are both well adapted to wet conditions and periodic summer dry spells.



L to r: Hedychium 'Maximum, Hedychium flavum, Costus pictus 'Red Stem' and 'Chiapas'

GINGERS (by Ceil Dow)

Surprisingly, Butterfly Gingers and Costus didn't seem to mind but hinted that they enjoyed the water. Here are a few varieties that did extremely well.

- **HEDYCHIUM 'MAXIMUM,'** most fragrant of all butterfly gingers, is named for enormous white blossom clusters throughout summer.
- **HEDYCHIUM FLAVUM** is an easy bloomer. Masses of fragrant, butterfly-attracting, heat-tolerant yellow blossoms late June through October.
- **COSTUS PICTUS 'Red Stem'** and **'Chiapas'** display the corkscrew stem topped with an inflorescence of yellow and red-striped tubular flowers. These are goblets of nectar for the hummingbirds.



Abelia, left, and Mexican buckeye

TREES & SHRUBS (by Amy Conroy and Julee Jackson)

Several plants surprised us as to how well they did after the flood. Not only do these two species seem flood tolerant, they also have a high tolerance for drought.

- **ABELIAS** looked bad, totally defoliated, but with a month they were pushing out new growth
- **MEXICAN BUCKEYE** (*UNGNADIA SPECIOSE*). The first day back in the area it was pushing out leaves and flower buds.



L to r, Firespike and Louisiana iris



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SHADE AND SUN PERENNIALS (by Charlyn Brown, Liz Van Der Laag & Kitt Burnsides)

- **FIRESPIKES.** You might not think about shade perennials surviving flood waters, but the very tough Odontonmeas - Firespike are true survivors, happy and healthy after surviving not one, but two floods, pushing new growth up through a layer of half-inch hardened silt. A great hummingbird and butterfly magnet
- **LOUISIANA IRIS.** In December, in the woods we found 40 or so encased in silt, yet still very much alive!

Both plants are winter hardy in our area and have a high heat tolerance.