



No place creates a fall bulb display like the Southern garden. Shown are oxblood lilies, white spider lilies and rain lilies. Find these and more at the Master Gardener Bulb Sale on Saturday at the Moore Senior Center on Fairfield Avenue.

—Denyse Cummins, LSU AgCenter horticulturist

Home front



Guests will be delighted, not spooked when you put out these towels. Price: \$9.99 each. Available: The Enchanted Garden, 2429 Line Ave., Shreveport.

"Seeing Flowers" looks at blooms in a way you probably never have. Author Teri Dunn Chace and photographer Robert Llewellyn teamed up to explore flowers in intricate detail — the subtleties of their colors, the delicacy of their petals, the form of their leaves. Llewellyn's photography forms the basis of the book. Price: \$29.95, published by Timber Press.



SEEING FLOWERS



Three dishes in The Clementine Hunter Collection on display at Lewis Gifts in Shreveport. JIM HUELSON/THE TIMES

Classic Clementine. *reimagined*

Hunter-inspired serving dishes being sold in Shreveport-Bossier City

By Maggle Martin
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The late — and beloved — Natchitoches artist Clementine Hunter always painted what she knew or an interpretation of what she heard. The most familiar of those scenes include cotton picking, a jar filled with zinnias, picking pecans or washing clothes in a wash pot. (Some more unusual pieces not in the line were a "Black Jesus," "Natchitoches Parish From the Air," and a game of basketball.) The originals have soared in price, so Gitter Gallery owner Doug Gitter, of New Orleans, decided to take her artwork and make it more

affordable. He translated the familiar scenes onto hand-painted ceramic platters and bowls which are serving pieces. And even though the dishes certainly can be used to serve food, customers are using them for accent pieces and giving them for gifts, said Catherine Hobbs, an owner of Lewis Gifts. "They are buying the wedding scene for wedding gifts," Hobbs added. "Collectors are purchasing them, adding to pieces they already have," said Dihana Ragsdale, decorator at Chinaberry's, Bossier City. "And people are buying them for Christmas gifts."

For the first collection, Gitter took nine pieces of everyday life on a Southern Plantation, most widely known as part of Hunter's work, and plans to add to the collection next year. The nine pieces now available: "Cotton Mural," "Baptism on Cane river," "Cotton Picking," "Pecan Picking," "Cotton Wagon," "Fish Fry," "The Wedding," "Zinnias Looking at You," "Wash Day." Gitter said he selected images of Hunter's more well-known subjects depicting what everyday plantation life was like in Hunter's rural South. He added zinnias because they were her favorite flower.

See DISHES, Page 2



A "Cotton Picking" bowl in The Clementine Hunter Collection. JIM HUELSON/THE TIMES

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2L THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2013 LIFE shreveporttimes.com • THE TIMES

Prepare container plants for winter season

Although I'm guessing, I suspect there are not too many residences that don't have at least one potted plant growing somewhere in the home. The vast majority of people seem to make a connection with green plants, maybe because they know and understand that plants are the basis for all forms of life. While some may not be fully conscious of this connection, others are aware of and totally embrace this fact thereby making this relationship one of significance and importance.



Joe White
Horticulture

The great part about this situation is that no matter where you live, it's a connection that is easily made. Thus those who reside in apartments, town houses, condominiums and cottages have the ability to nurture and enjoy potted plants just as well as those who live in large homes in gated communities. No matter where a plant is located, its needs must be addressed and that includes preparing it for the winter season. Although not possible in every case, giving potted plants a "vacation" outdoors during the warm months of the year is a recommended practice because under outdoor conditions where light and humidity are more

favorable, plants tend to thrive. But before late fall comes with its first frost, many potted plants must be returned to the protection of the home or to a greenhouse if that's an option. Most plants don't adjust to a radical change in environment rapidly ... which is what happens when you bring a plant indoors immediately from an outdoor location that offers bright light. Plants need to be conditioned to such a stark change gradually. And this is how you do it. Take a potted specimen from a high light location and move it to the light shade of a tree or covered patio or porch. Leave it there for about two weeks. Next, move it to an area of

heavy shade for about two more weeks. By then it will be accustomed to the lower light levels it will experience in most homes and you can then move it indoors to the preferred location. While all of this is taking place, there are other things you should be doing with your plant. Does it appear to have outgrown its pot during its summer vacation? If so, plan to move your plant to one or two pot sizes larger. In the process it's a good idea to improve the medium in which the plant is growing. There will be about 10 percent to 20 percent more room in the larger pot, so select a medium that is similar to that in which the plant is presently

growing. This is also an opportunity to address the plant's nutritional needs. There will be no better time to mix in an appropriate slow release fertilizer which generally does away with any need for fertilization during the plant's indoor stay. However, if you personally prefer soluble fertilizers, the alternative is to fertilize periodically throughout the winter, but only half as often as during the warm months. Once the plant has settled into its new pot, it will probably benefit from some grooming. That means cutting out any dead parts and possibly removing some live parts to re-shape the canopy for a more pleas-

ing appearance. With several plants these live pieces of tissue can be used to form new plants. While grooming, be very watchful for any signs of disease or for any invasion by insect pests. Be sure to remove any parts that are suspected to harbor disease organisms and treat the plant with appropriate insecticides (while it is still outdoors). This is also a good time to replace pots that are chipped or cracked with an identical new one or perhaps with a stylized pot that would show off your plant better. Joe W. White is a retired Extension horticulturist with the LSU Agricultural Center. Email him at jozbar@comcast.net.



A "Pecan Picking" platter in The Clementine Hunter Collection. JIM HUELSON/THE TIMES

Dishes

Continued from Page 1

Even if you didn't want to serve in them, wouldn't they be great to use as decoration for a party — "Fish Fry" for a fish fry, of course, "Cotton Picking" for a country event and "The Wedding" at a reception or shower. And, zinnias? A garden gathering! Both stores say that "Cotton Mural" has been the most popular. "We have sold out of it and reordered," said a Lewis owner Mary Jean Lewis. "We are low on the fish fry and cotton picking because people in our area relate to them," Lewis added. The dishes include round, oval and square bowls and platters, they range in price from \$118 to \$168, said Gitter. He pointed out that "relier" is added to each piece. "You can actually feel the movement throughout each piece. Each has its own distinctive shape and style and is hand-painted, so no two are alike," he explained. Each Tiffany-blue box features Hunters' famous "CH" signature and each comes with the artists' biography and a



A "Cotton Wagon" platter in The Clementine Hunter Collection. JIM HUELSON/THE TIMES

picture of her. Gitter says the dishes are both microwave and dishwasher safe, but recommends they be hand-washed with mild soap. Gitter never met Hunter, but his wife who lived in Alexandria did and remembers that school groups would take field trips to meet her. Pointing out that Hunter was never formally trained, Gitter said she captured a part of the American South which has disappeared. "She captured what life was like in the rural South prior to mechanization coming to agriculture," he added. And, fans love to look back and see what Hunter saw. Her whimsical simple pieces make it easy to do that.

Halloween parties can still be fun for grown-ups

By Melissa Rayworth
Associated Press

Send invitations to your grown-up friends and you'll probably find they haven't outgrown Halloween. Turning your home into a haunted mansion is surprisingly easy, says interior designer Brian Patrick Flynn, founder of Flynnside Out Productions. Flynn and two other design experts — Jon Call of Mr. Call Designs and the latest "HGTV Star" winner, Tiffany Brooks — offer decorating advice for a memorable, stylish and affordable Halloween party.

Natural fabrics Cheesecloth evokes ancient mummies, while burlap brings to mind scarecrows. Both fabrics are inexpensive and lightweight, but sturdy — perfect for Halloween party tablecloths. These solid-color pieces also have a more adult feel than the whimsical prints on Halloween tablecloths or napkins designed for kids. Call likes using large sheets of brown craft paper on buffet tables or as a runner down the center of a Halloween dining table. Cluster



Bare branches, spray-painted black and secured in vases with gravel, floral foam and a layer of moss, make a stunning and inexpensive Halloween centerpiece created by designer Brian Patrick Flynn. SARAH DORIOAP

small gourds (the darker and more oddly shaped, the better) along the runner, he says, then add a few large pillar candles. **Dark colors** All three designers suggest using a muted palette of grays, browns and black. Brooks suggests spray-painting pumpkins glossy gray to create a glamorous centerpiece. Use orange only as an accent, Flynn says, perhaps adding a few orange napkins to an otherwise black and gray table setting. You can also create a dramatic scene by spray-painting empty wine bottles in a matte black, he says, then replacing the labels with

your own creations. **Weird walls** Take down any cheerful artwork and replace it with old portraits from thrift shops or flea markets. Halloween stores sell deliberately creepy portraits made for this purpose, but it's more fun to hunt down real paintings, says Flynn. Brooks agrees that this easy decorating move can transform the feel of a room, especially if the room will be lit only by candles. Once you've hung your new gallery of portraits, Flynn suggests taping tiny pieces of black construction paper over the eyeballs in the pictures for a haunted mansion feel.



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