

going native

SPECIAL GARDENING SECTION

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ON THE COVER
American Beautyberry
by Kirk Ross



Stress-Free Gardening with Drought-Tolerant Natives

BY KEN MOORE

The intent of my gardening strategy is to replace the stress with enjoyment. Rather than struggling to enforce my design on Nature, I step back and garden with a lighter touch, letting Nature be my guide.

I have gradually altered the garden to favor desirable plants that plant themselves. They almost always perform better than the ones I plant. I was impressed that the volunteer Joe-pye-weed, *Eupatorium fistulosum*, at the edge of my patio did not require extra water as did the one I had carefully planted in a garden bed.

The garden changes with surprises each year because I take note of where plants naturally occur and shift my efforts to those new spots. I keep a sharp eye out for the late spring emergence of the perennial native vine, Passion-flower, *Passiflora incarnata*, which never stays in place. When I spot it, that's

where I place the moveable trellises. No water, fertilizer, nor toxic chemicals are required for a season-long display of foliage, flowers and fruit.

Another of my favorite native vines, Trumpet Creeper, *Campsis radicans*, volunteered close to the kitchen window where the orange trumpet flowers attract hummingbirds all through the summer. I never watered those vines during the drought. During the winter I enjoyed watching goldfinches hanging on the pods extracting the seeds.

I love my easy care 'freedom lawn' yard. I call it a lawn just after my infrequent mowing. When we have ample rainfall it's green. During droughts, it turns brown with green spots of tougher plants scattered throughout. It returns to green each time it rains. A variety of grasses and flowering weeds provides year round interest and

SEE **KEN MOORE** PAGE 5

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