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Carolinians  
Increase Their  
Knowledge of  
Gardening,  
Manage Their  
Landscape  
Investment &  
Protect the  
Environment

## JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

### Bring Magic into Your Garden with Resurrection Lily

**A** plant that goes by the names of resurrection lily, magic lily and even the surprise lily is enough to make gardeners stop in their tracks. Those who grow this plant may know it by another, yet non-flashy, name – *Lycoris squamigera*.

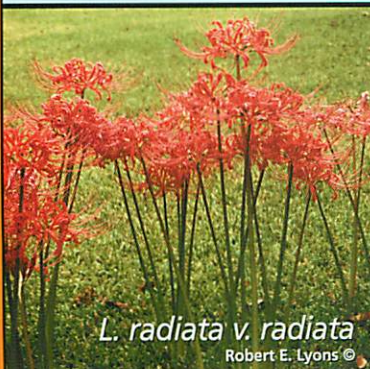
*L. squamigera* is a late summer flowering bulb. The foliage emerges every spring, but then dies back by the beginning of summer. At this point, gardeners may assume it has died, but this is where the magic or the surprise lies. What actually occurs is that it goes into a brief dormancy period. After this brief dormancy, which lasts for a few weeks, two-inch flower stalks emerge from what seems like barren ground. Within four days from first emerging, these flower stalks will bear anywhere from four to seven nodding, 3-inch, rose-pink flowers.

*L. squamigera* is one of the preferred *Lycoris* species to grow due to its wide growing range. It is the most cold hardy of the *Lycoris* species. Not only that, but it also grows well in various soil types. This plant thrives in full sun or partial shade, though its flowers perform best in full sun. *L. squamigera* is attractive in borders and containers. It does well in an open woodland garden where its messy, late spring foliage is not a problem.

The resurrection lily is a low maintenance plant, making it a joy for gardeners. Insects and diseases pose no problems and the plant does not require a lot of watering. Due to its brief dormancy period in late summer, it does just fine in the hot weather. Plant *L. squamigera* bulbs about 6 inches deep in the fall. They will gradually spread over time. Neighbors will be sure to line up to get their hands on this exciting gem of a plant.

Check out this and other species in the genus *Lycoris* at the JC Raulston Arboretum at NC State University in Raleigh. They all seem to behave similarly with that quirky transient attitude, so you have to be quick. *Lycoris aurea* is a lovely golden yellow and *L. radiata* v. *radiata* has striking scarlet flowers displayed like spidery clusters. Learn more at [www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum](http://www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum). **Ben Dungan**

*Lycoris squamigera*  
Robert E. Lyons ©



*L. radiata* v. *radiata*  
Robert E. Lyons ©



*L. squamigera*  
Robert E. Lyons ©



*L. squamigera*  
Robert E. Lyons ©

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Daylilies and Crocosmias



Bleeding Hearts &amp; Hostas



Gaillardias &amp; Zinnias

## Creative Companion Plantings for Your Garden Canvas

Companion planting is the technique of creating “buddy” plants that grow well together. These combined plants benefit from the characteristics of each other.

The Native Americans developed one of the first examples of companion planting. It was called “Three Sisters” and involved planting corn, beans and squash together in a hill. The corn stalks provided support for the climbing beans and the squash growing at the base of the corn shaded out weeds.

One effect sought through companion plants is reduced insect pests. Use companion plants to hide, repel or trap pests. For example, Japanese beetles and spider mites do not like garlic, so this is a good companion for roses. Onions, garlic and chives may help block ants, aphids and flea beetles. Mint may keep cabbage loopers off cabbage plants while basil can discourage tomato hornworms. Companion plants such as numerous perennials, asters, calendulas and cosmos add welcome color in the garden and attract a variety of beneficial insects.

Companion planting in its simplest form can be the combining of plants for no other purpose than visual effect. Combine plants to extend the flowering period in a planting bed, create a focal point or to provide a backdrop for flowers. Combining annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, vines and herbs can provide a spectacular flower show, in both garden beds and containers.

Be creative and experiment with what works well for your garden. Sometimes “accidents” with companion planting result in better combinations of colors and textures than if they had been planned.

Remember these basic tips: Do not plant sun-loving plants with shade-loving plants because one of

the plants will not be happy. Do not put plants that prefer to stay moist with plants that do not like “wet feet.” Also consider the combinations of the color of the flowers and the color and texture of the leaves.

Dr. Robert Lyons, director of the JC Raulston Arboretum at NC State University, has some recommendations.

### Picture these combinations:

- The scarlet red flower of the *Crococsmia x crocosmiiflora* ‘Lucifer’ blooming in the middle of yellow daylilies, *Hemerocallis* hybrid, during July.
- A red cardinal flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*, coming out of the green and white foliage of the *Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Variegatus’ ornamental grass.
- A beautiful bleeding heart, *Dicentra eximia* ‘Luxuriant’, blooming deep pink as the new young hosta leaves are growing. The fringe foliage of the *Dicentra* intertwined in the hosta leaves adds interest.
- *Zinnia angustifolia* ‘Star white’ with *Gaillardia pulchella* ‘Red Plume’
- *Rudbeckia hirta* ‘Indian Summer’ with *Zinnia angustifolia* ‘Crystal White’
- Ice plant, *Delosperma cooperi*, with *Sedum album* ‘Murale’
- Fountain grass, *Pennisetum alopecuroides*, with *Iris x germanica* (bearded iris)
- Fountain grass, *Pennisetum setaceum* ‘Rubrum’, with *Verbena bonariensis*
- *Impatiens walleriana* with Hakone grass, *Hakonechloa macra* ‘Aureola’
- Pulmonarias with Heucheras
- *Lantana camara* with Duckfoot coleus

Become a garden artist and paint your canvas with companion plants. **Emily Revels**

## Pansies Brighten Winter

Pansies are a delicate-looking flower often with a “face.” The delicate looks do not mean they are fragile. This charming plant is quite durable, blooming prolifically from fall, when planted, through the spring when they perish due to the heat.

The plant itself is compact, not more than 9 inches in both height and spread. As garden annuals go, this plant has one of the widest color ranges. The flowers may be of a single color or have two or three colors with a face. Flower colors include red, purple, blue, pink, black, orange, yellow, white, lavender, apricot and mahogany.

see **Pansies** on page 3 ▶







## Why do I need lime?

Lime is needed when the soil pH is low. Soil pH is the level of acidity in the soil. A soil that has a pH less than 7.0 is considered acidic. High levels of acidity can reduce root growth or cause nutrient deficiency. A low pH (high acid) can also reduce the plant's ability to protect itself from disease and insect damage. Most landscape and garden plants grow best in a pH range of 6.0 to 7.0. Lime neutralizes the acidity of the soil, improves the availability of certain nutrients in the soil and can supply

the essential nutrients of calcium and magnesium depending on the type of lime used. There are two types of lime used for agricultural purposes: calcitic and dolomitic. Calcitic limestone contains calcium carbonate but little or no magnesium. Dolomitic limestone contains both calcium and magnesium carbonates. It is important to take a soil sample and apply lime based on current soil test recommendations. Overliming can reduce the availability of certain micronutrients. This problem is common on sandy coastal plain soils. *Amy Lynn Albertson*

## ENVIRO-TIP

### Cover Crops Enrich Soil

Improve your garden soil for better crop production by growing a cover crop in the off-season. Cover crops help maintain soil fertility and productivity while also helping prevent soil erosion. In addition, they help suppress weeds and reduce insect pests and diseases.

Green manure is the term used for cover crops that are incorporated into the soil while green or soon after flowering for the purpose of improving the soil. The type of cover crop you choose depends on the time of planting and your primary objective. Plant winter cover crops in late summer or fall when garden spots would otherwise lie fallow for the winter.

Plant summer green manure crops in the spring to improve the condition of poor soil. Grasses generally are used to increase organic matter and suppress weeds. Legumes add nitrogen to the soil. Consider some of the following species to fit your needs.



*Crimson Clover*

Recommended summer annual legumes include cowpea, soybean, velvetbean and sunnhemp. Sorghum-sudangrass, German millet, pearl millet and Japanese millet are non-legumes for summer use.

Good winter annual legumes are crimson clover, berseem clover and hairy vetch. Winter rye is a good choice if you are looking for a winter annual grass. Annual ryegrass also can be used but be cautious as it can become a future weed problem in some situations. Mixtures of legumes and grass species also can be used to optimize the benefits of cover crops.

To learn more about this soil-enhancing agronomic practice, visit [www.ncstate-plants.net](http://www.ncstate-plants.net). Find your way to commercial horticulture leaflets, commercial vegetable production, then to HIL 37 "Summer Cover Crops." *Mike Wilder*

## Pansies



*continued from page 2*

Another quality of interest to gardeners is fragrance. Some pansies have a delicate perfume-like aroma. The yellow and blue pansy flowers seem to have the strongest scent. Grow pansies in mass plantings or in containers. The idea is to concentrate the fragrant bouquet as well as the color of many plants in one area for a striking effect.

Pansies can be started inside from seed about 6 to 8 weeks before it's time to transplant them. Plant them in the garden once the summer heat breaks and cooler weather arrives. Pansies grow and flower best at temperatures below 65 degrees F, making them ideal for fall plants.

Pansy popularity continues to increase due to their ease of growing. They are relatively disease- and pest-free, blooming profusely for the gardeners' enjoyment.

*Karen Neill*

### Gardentalk



*"Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas."*

– Elizabeth Murray





perennial sunflower  
Robert E. Lyons ©

Garden Spot

## Penny's Bend Nature Preserve in

Durham was established to preserve an ecosystem and plant community rarely found in this area. Unusual geology and shallow basic soils have created a prairie-like environment that contains plants more commonly found in the Midwest. Managed by the North Carolina Botanical Garden, the 84-acre preserve contains two hiking trails. The 1 1/2-mile River Bend Trail follows the scenic river through forested areas. An early spring trip rewards the visitor with the blooms of many woodland perennials. The 1-mile Ridge Trail provides access to the open fields that are home to the prairie plants. Many of the plant species found here would make excellent additions to the home garden, though visitors should remember not to harvest any plants or seeds. Open daily, the preserve is located on Snow Hill Road near the intersection with Old Oxford Road. For more information, contact the North Carolina Botanical Garden at (919) 962-0522 or visit the Web site of the Eno River Association at [www.enoriver.org](http://www.enoriver.org).

Paul McKenzie

## Gardening in September

### Lawns

- Seed tall fescue this month. Remember to mulch newly seeded areas with wheat straw.
- Fertilize and lime your tall fescue according to soil test results.
- Continue to apply insecticide for grubs in lawns.
- Plant or sod tall fescue lawns. Core aerate cool-season turf.

### Ornamentals

- Prepare houseplants to take inside for winter. Wash down with an insecticidal soap or horticultural oil to kill insects. Bring houseplants inside before temperatures drop into the 50s.
- Continue weekly rose spray program.
- Control woody weeds such as trumpet creeper, blackberry and poison ivy now with a herbicide such as Roundup.
  - Set out perennials. Place markers next to them to prevent you from disturbing them next spring when planting.
  - Spruce up containers with plants for fall color such as colorful mums and decorative kales and cabbages.
  - Clean up garden areas to reduce insects and diseases as plants die back for winter.
    - Do not fertilize shrubs or perennials.

### Edibles

- Spray for peach tree borers on plums, cherries, peaches and nectarine trunks.
- Keep a close eye on vegetable gardens. Insects and diseases are more severe as we enter autumn.
- Plant mustard, onions, radishes and turnips in the fall vegetable garden.
- Start your own backyard berry patch. Some tried and true strawberry varieties for the Southeast include 'Atlas', 'Titan', 'Earlibelle', 'Earliglow' and 'Sweet Charlie'.
  - Strawberry plants are developing flowerbuds for next spring's berries. For good produce next year fertilize strawberry beds with 1 to 2 pounds of 33-0-0 per 100 feet of row and keep beds watered during September and October. *Karen Neill*



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