

# Festival of Gardening returns to Riverside Park

Two years ago, there were thousands of plants to sell at Riverside Park as Master Gardeners geared up for their annual Festival of Gardening. Then everything fell apart as everyone stayed home to avoid the pandemic.

FOG returns this Saturday to the park and it is going to be bigger and better than ever. Over the past year, these volunteer educators have been working overtime to produce thousands more potted plants to meet the public's gardening needs.

Tomato plants are their specialty. You can choose from old familiar varieties, such as Early Girl and Super-sonic, as well as newer ones, such as Chef's Choice Red.

Among the 35 kinds of tomatoes you will find are many delicious heirloom varieties such as Amish Paste, Brandywine, Mortgage Lifter and Pruden's Purple. Miniature tomatoes available

include Adelaide Festival and Sweet Scarlet Dwarf.

Lovers of spicy food will attend FOG to stock up on the Ancho, Jalapeno, Cayenne, Habanero and Ghost peppers.

Heirloom peppers such as King of the North, California Wonder and Big Bertha will be there along with Lesya from Ukraine.

Twenty kinds of mostly culinary herbs will be sold. You can buy lemon basil and the large leafed Genovese, plus a slow bolting cilantro called Santo.

More than 25 kinds of wildflowers and native plants are going to be at FOG. Your backyard's pollinators will appreciate the milk weed, bee balm and twin leaf among others.

A similar number of perennials will



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be sold. The usual daylilies, peonies and hostas are going to be available plus many others not seen in stores, such as walking iris and Pacific Giants delphiniums with their tall spikes of pink, purple, blue and white flowers.

Many varieties of African violet are among the 40 kinds of houseplants and tropicals to be featured at FOG. You will be able to get various exotic houseplants rarely seen for sale anywhere, including night blooming cereus, zebra plant, clivia and variegated heart leaf philodendron.

You can improve your home landscaping by adding shrubbery and trees obtained at FOG. The 25 kinds to be sold include trees such as magnolia, redbud and crepe myrtle, and also shrubs such as fragrant lilac, early blooming forsythia and tall growing nandina or heavenly bamboo.

Early birds will get the plants they want, so you may need to arrive by

8 a.m. to observe the layout in Riverside Park and be ready to select your favorites when the shopping starts. Sales run from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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The weather is getting warm enough to begin moving houseplants out of your home to live on your porch or deck for the next few months. Christmas cactus and amaryllis plants can withstand some chilly weather so they are the first to come out.

Later in May, it finally will be warm enough to set out your tropical foliage plants. These include dracaena, rubber plant and peace lily, plants that prefer nights in the 60s and 70s.

For best results, locate your houseplants in a shady place protected from wind close to your garden hose.

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