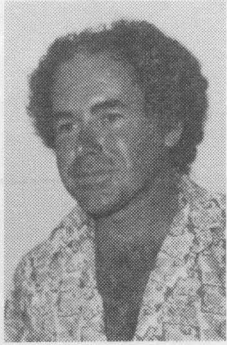


BOTANICALS FOR THE BIRDS

by Lee Horton



Lee Horton

This column deals with the importance of certain plants in the support and attraction of birds in the garden. Many plants are ornamental as well as beneficial to our native birds.

My first choice (a specialty of mine) is the Coral Trees (*Erythrina*). There are many different Corals, some trees, other shrub-like. They can be used as hedges, ground covers or shade trees. Many parts of the world — Malaysia, Australia,

Africa, Central America, Mexico — have Corals. Most are tender and this must be considered when deciding which to plant in your garden.

Corals attract nectar eaters, humming birds, tanagers and orioles, humming birds being one of the most interesting and smallest. Tanagers and orioles the most dramatic with their orange, yellow and black plumage.

The Corals easily found in Southern California nurseries are: *Caffra*, *Coralloides*, *Bidwillii*, and *Crista-galli*.

Caffra (South Africa) is the fastest growing, becoming a tree of 40 feet. Blooms February (before leaves appear) in large clusters of red-orange tubular flowers.

Coralloides (Mexico) is a tree about 30 feet, but slower growing (all grow fast). Blooms March to May. Flowers are fiery red like fat candles or branch tips. Leaves appear after flowering.

Crista-galli (Brazil) blooms appear after leaves in spring and throughout summer and fall. Flowers are loose bird-like clusters of pink to wine color, growing shrub-like to 15 feet.

Bidwillii (Hybrid) has 2 foot long clusters of pure deep red flowers at the end of willowy fronds. The favorite of humming birds, it blooms spring through fall, and it is easy to train as a hedge, ground cover or small tree.

Other Corals that can be found in nurseries are the *Humeana*, *Lysistemon*, *Americana* and *Falcata*.

Many new varieties of Corals (Central American) are being tested here. We should soon see many of them on the market.

At my gardens we have over 20 varieties planted out in the field. The yellow form of *Caffra*, the pink form of *Coralloides* and many new unnamed varieties.

For those wanting unusual varieties of Corals the following sources are suggested:

David Barrey, Jr. San Vicente, West Los Angeles, Calif.
Tropic World, Hwy.395, Escondido, Calif.
La Costa Nursery, Leucadia, Calif.

Happy Gardening,
Lee

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