

XERISCAPE DEMONSTRATION GARDEN IS TAKING SHAPE

By: Hayes Jackson, Urban Regional Extension Agent

The xeriscape demonstration bed in front of the Calhoun County Administration Building is beginning to showcase its colorful blooms and interesting foliage.

The project began in 2009 with the addition of several new plantings on the Noble Street side of the building located on the 1700 block in downtown Anniston. Xeriscaping is the utilization of drought tolerant or low water use plants in order to conserve water. Conserving water is not only an earth friendly practice, but lowering water usage can help consumers reduce water bills and avoid plant loss during local outdoor water bans. Choosing plants that are accustomed to dry soil conditions, utilizing drought tolerant native plants, and implementing water-conserving practices is a wonderful way to become a better steward of our environment.

For more information check our website, www.aces.edu/calhoun, or call our office at 256-237-1621.



Not in the xeriscape bed, but a nice clump of basjoo bananas on the north side of the building.



Left: The Xeriscape bed features an unusual Nainital Windmill Palm, a Beaked Yucca, & Century Plant can be seen in the background.

Right: Agave, Stonecrop & Rosemary in the xeriscape bed. Xeriscape refers to the use of drought tolerant or lower water-use plant selections.



Surprise Lilies, Magic Lilies, or Naked Ladies... This Hardy Bulb Goes By Many Names in the Garden

Mid-summer in the Deep South usually causes most living things to slow down the pace and withdraw to a cooler spot. However, in the depth of the summer heat is when one perennial bulb just gets going in gardens across the area.



Known as *Magic Lily*, *Surprise Lily*, and even "*nekkid ladies*" because of the leafless floral display, this *Lycoris* species (*Lycoris squamigera*) is suitable to most soils as long as there is sunlight available to host the satiny pink tubular blooms. The strap-like foliage only appears in winter after the flowers have long faded just like the singing katydids and dancing fireflies.

Allow the foliage to die off on its own as it is manufacturing energy to produce the stalks of lovely blooms again each summer. These bulbs make a great addition to any garden providing durable, yet delicate blooms that stand up to the worst summer heat Alabama can offer.