A Time to Heal and Rebuild
A clean canvas, a fresh start, a new garden … there have been occasions when newly acquired plants worked better in the vision of my garden then in the reality of it. There have been other occasions when I tired of a particular look and wished to try something different but long established plants are difficult to move or replace. Since Hurricane Ike visited my garden, I have found myself with an opportunity to begin anew.

While I await the results of my soil analysis, I have been sketching plans, designing flowerbeds in my dreams and envisioning a new look. Shall I use only perennials or all tropica ls … a butterfly garden or a vegetable garden? The choices are endless.

I have already seen several plants greening-up. The bottlebrush is in bloom as are many oleanders around town. The yucca has require little care or maintenance.

Upon our return home, the day after Hurricane Ike paid his visit, I stood aghast, speechless and in shock as I surveyed what had been over twenty years of gardening completely gone. Not just burned, brown and dying, but completely gone. Huge sago palms, Giant Agaves, barrels of hibiscus … gone. No sign that they had ever been there except for the enormous holes in the ground. The split rail fence that bordered the property with its beautiful bougainvillea … gone, not one rail to be found.

Of course there was the burned, brown and dead … all the citrus trees, beds of Ixora, ferns, orchids and the greenhouse itself was destroyed. Discouraged and depressed, I decided to take some time before making any decisions about what to do with my garden.

Survivors:
The following are examples of some that may survive a salt-water bath or may be considered “user-friendly”.

Plants unaffected:
Sago Palms
Fan Palms
Queen Palms
Ixora
Sprengeri Ferns
Yucca

Plants Revitalized:
Amaryllis
Bottlebrush
Elephant Ears
Easter Lillies

Plants that recovered:
Fruit trees (lime, lemon)
Bougainvillea
Climbing Roses
Hibiscus
Crepe Myrtle
Cannas

“User-friendly” plants:
Althea (Rose of Sharon)
Agave
Amaryllis
Bottlebrush
Bougainvillea
Cactus
Carolina Jasmine
Crepe Myrtle
Crow of Thorns
Datura
Esperanza
Ficus
Fiddle-leaf Fig

Hamelia (Butterfly bush)
Firecracker Fern
Milkweed
Most Palm Trees
Norfolk Pine
Pencil Tree
Periwinkles
Philodendron
Plumeria
Sanseviera
Rubber Tree
Tunera
Yucca

brilliant new growth and the amaryllis bulbs are pushing up green leaves. Meanwhile to boost my morale and brighten the area around our home, I have planned a visit to my favorite garden center to check out the assortment of fall annuals. Some clay pots rode out the storm and a friend brought me some potting soil so I will make a few choice selections, pansies perhaps with their cheery little faces, or my favorite petunias.

I wrote an article many years ago called “The Dreaded Rise of the Tide”. Although this event was more than a rise of the tide, many of those same plants mentioned in that article have survived and may become a mainstay in my new garden look. Other possibilities might include what I call the “user-friendly” plants, those plants that I have found to be pest and disease resistant and

By the time Randy Lemmon called me while broadcasting his radio show, Gardenline Talkshow on KTRH, I was making some progress. My comment to Randy was that I was in a watch, wait and water mode. Some trees had survived, a bottlebrush, a Queen palm, a Mexican fan palm, two Florida Sabals, two twenty-foot Norfolk Island Pines, some Yuccas and a giant white Bird of Paradise. I am hoping that the Crepe Myrtle will make it as well as an Oleander that I have treasured.

These survivors will be the cornerstone plants of a new garden, one that is certain to bring me pleasure for the next twenty years! Jan Brick is a certified Master Gardener and a full time resident of Jamaica Beach. She can be contacted by email at theislandgarden@aol.com.
Sago Palms

Queen Palms

Amaryllis

Bottlebrush

Bougainvillea

Hibiscus

Agave

Rose of Sharon

Firecracker Fern

Plumeria

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