

# A flowering plant for all seasons



**PLEASING TO THE EYE:** *Thunbergias* in full bloom. - PHOTO: N. CHANDRAMOHAN REDDY

## SOME POPULAR THUNBERGIAS

Botanical name	Common name	Origin	Flower colour
<i>Thunbergia alata</i>	Black-eyed Susan	Tropical Eastern Africa	Orange yellow with dark centre
<i>Thunbergia alata</i> 'Alba'	Black-eyed Susan		White with dark purple-brown centre
<i>Thunbergia alata</i> 'Lemon Star'	Black-eyed Susan		Light yellow with dark centre
<i>Thunbergia alata</i> 'Spanish Eyes'	Black-eyed Susan		Dark red, red-orange, cream with dark centre
<i>Thunbergia erecta</i> ( <i>Meyenia erecta</i> )	King's Mantle, Bush Clock-vine	Tropical Africa	Deep purple with yellow throat
<i>Thunbergia erecta</i> 'Alba'	White Bush Clock-vine		White with yellow throat
<i>Thunbergia fragrans</i>	White Lady, Sweet Clock-vine	India	White
<i>Thunbergia grandiflora</i>	Bengal Clock-vine, Blue Sky-flower, Blue Trumpet vine	North-eastern India, Bhutan, Burma and Nepal	Lavender blue
<i>Thunbergia grandiflora</i> 'Alba'	Bengal Clock-vine, White Sky vine		White
<i>Thunbergia laurifolia</i>	Blue Trumpet vine, Laurel Clock-vine	India, Southeast Asia	Blue-violet to white
<i>Thunbergia mysorensis</i>	Clock-vine, Indian Clock-vine, Manjarabad creeper	India	Bright yellow with purplish-red outer tip

They are the flowers a child would love to draw and colour. Simple in shape, yet striking in hues, *Thunbergias* are versatile in providing gardening solutions too. They can climb, creep, cover and screen, adapting dutifully to whichever responsibility they are assigned. One only has to choose the ungainly locations in a garden and drown them in *Thunbergia*.

*Thunbergia* genus, which belongs to the family Acanthaceae, consists of about 100 species of mainly climbers and shrubs from warm areas of Africa, Madagascar and Asia.

Some of the *Thunbergia* species are commonly used in gardens for their showy foliage and large, bright flowers. *Thunbergia* is named after the 18th century Swedish botanist and explorer Carl Peter Thunberg.

### Characteristics

Several of the best-known *Thunbergia* species are evergreen, fast growing climbers, excepting *Thunbergia erecta* which is a shrub. Leaves are large, thick, deep green, and oval shaped, with the edges often saw-toothed. Flowers are large, funnel shaped with five spreading lobes, in blue, white, orange, yellow, and purple varying with the species.

They bloom almost year round.

### Gardening

*Thunbergias* are aggressive vines which can be trained on pergola, trellis, fence, porch, arch, or wall in short time. They can be grown in large containers. These easy-to-care-for climb-

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ing shrubs are ideal for creating a privacy screen or simply providing a lush green backdrop for other flowering plants.

*Thunbergia erecta* is used as shrub and can also be grown as topiary, hedge and as groundcover.

*Thunbergia alata* is a large spreading creeper that can be used in containers, hanging baskets or to cover very large spaces of the garden ground.

*Thunbergia mysorensis* is massive climbing shrub with pendant branches and inflorescences, which can cover large areas, creating green shade in the garden.

### Great vines

*Thunbergia grandiflora* and *Thunbergia laurifolia* have very rampant growth habit and are great vines for the quick covering of arbours, trellises and fences.

They can be successfully used as a screen or as container plants and can cover large walls, buildings, lamp posts, old trees or any unsightly spaces of the garden.

With a robust and twining habit, producing long hanging clusters of blue or white funnel-shaped flowers and dense, deep green foliage, they can be trellised to create a spectacular effect.

Many of the *Thunbergias* prefer full sun and well-drained soil but can

bloom in partial shade also. Amend the soil with copious amounts of compost or well-rotted manure to improve texture and to retain moisture. Select a sunny location that receives direct sunlight for six or more hours a day.

Regular and deep watering is needed for the plants, allowing the soil to dry slightly between waterings (but total dry soil will cause wilting and premature flower drop).

Since *Thunbergias* are rapid growers, application of balanced fertilizer every two weeks during blooming period will help in better growth and blooms. *Thunbergias* need a sturdy fence or trellis to withstand the weight and to be protected from strong winds. Regular pruning is required to maintain the shape, or to train the vine in required direction.

But vigorous pruning may inhibit flowering. Pruning shall be taken up after the blooming cycle is complete.

### Pests and problems

Though *Thunbergias* are generally very hardy, they are susceptible to spider mites, white flies, scale insects and nematodes. These problems can be overcome by normal pest management practices. Propagation of these plants is through seeds, cuttings and layers.

N. Chandramohan Reddy

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## Unispace brings top brands to city

Spread over 9,000 sq ft and across three levels, Unispace brings together the top brands from Europe and that too quintessentially luxury bath space products.

The store that opened this week at Jubilee Hills with extended space displaying latest range of sanitary ware and accessories stakes claim of setting standard for contemporary showcasing and retailing Bath Space luxury products in the city.

It also features the largest customer configuration lounge, an ultra-modern meeting space which allows prospective customers to browse at leisure. They cannot only select their specific choices for fittings from the range of brands, colours and designs, but will also be able to configure and customise products to meet individual needs.

Says Satish Bhargav, CEO, Unispace, "We wanted to create an environment where the trendy prospective buyers and their consultants feel comfortable and are provided with first-class service right through the process".



**UPPING THE STANDARDS:** The Unispace showroom which opened this week at Jubilee Hills with extended space displaying latest range of sanitary ware. - PHOTO: BY ARRANGEMENT

Adds Aparna S. Reddy, director, Unispace, "Carefully planned display of unique, trendy and world renowned brands and the experienced team to guide you through the process makes

it a special experience". The brands on display include Antoniolupi, Apaiser's, Bagno Design of London, Bossini, Bati, Cristina, Galassia, Vado and Zucchetti.

## Construction stones in demand

The traditional ones from A.P. cost less compared to marble and granite and yet provide durable floor finish, says **SATHYA PRAKASH VARANASHI**

Popularity of building materials is important in the real estate market since shops tend to promote what sells more. An alternative material, possibly equally good, would find it difficult to break into this circle and would either end up with low sale volume or higher price. Flooring has been a witness to such trends, where few materials bag most projects.

Andhra Pradesh is home to varieties of construction stones, including Tandoor, Bethamcherla, Shahbad, Cudapah and such, which make excellent floors. Most of them derive their name from the place of origin and are transported across South India based on orders. In principle, these Andhra stones cost much less compared to marble and granite, yet provide strong and durable floor finish. All of them come in small sizes, take good polish, have narrow joints, stay fresh even in shelf life and come in different colour too.

### Tandoor

Tandoor is more commonly used, and comes with in grey or green. It commonly comes in 2 ft. x 2 ft. size, and slight size variations are possible. The slabs are laid on the sub-floor made of mortar and a semi-dry mix of cement and sand, to a perfect level, followed by machine polishing. They never appear over-shining, hence maintain a natural feel even after polishing, going well with buildings made of natural materials.

Tandoor is a hard material, hence popularly used in public buildings and houses. It is prone to scratches but can be used in all conditions and areas including kitchens and outdoors. But if the outdoor floor gathers water, the only



A Bethamcherla floor can add to the visual appeal.

way to clean would be with dry mopping. So, the key is to ensure good rain protection.

Bethamcherla is a marble look-alike stone slab, hence popularly nicknamed as Bethamcherla marble. The material comes mainly in golden brown and buff grey colours, though a few colour variations are also available. Being tiles, popularly in 10"x10" size, there would be many joint lines visible.

The stone tends to be thicker even as floor slab, up to two inches thick, where prior floor level calculations become important. Because of the thickness, the

edges need to be cut at an angle to achieve a narrow joint. No two adjacent stones will look exactly alike, unlike marble; hence the floor gets a beautiful pattern.

Slabs with golden shade appear very rich when laid across a large area. Recently, special machine-cut thinner floor slabs have also been available. If it is beneficial, the owners can call one agency for both supply and laying, reducing inter-agency problems.

(The writer is an architect working for eco-friendly designs and can be contacted at varanashi@gmail.com)

## HMDA Growth Corridor will destroy green belt

This is in reference to 'Moving towards 100 per cent carbon city' published in *Property Plus* on September 1 issue.

It is deplorable that the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) is proposing a 'Growth Corridor' with multi-storeyed buildings on either side of the ring road, which callously destroys the green belt around the city.

The people of Hyderabad are already getting choked with increased traffic carbon

emissions, making the city rated the most polluted among the Indian Metropolis.

The HMDA is forgetting that the 'Growth Corridor' which creates more and more traffic would end up destroying the ecological balance there by expunging natural habitat. It is in this context and in the interests of the future generations that the proposed HMDA 'Growth Corridor' needs to be amended.

Kumar Vavili

## HOME BLOG

Have an opinion on issues concerning building policies, construction practise and real estate developments?

It could be about your experiences in buying a plot or constructing a house or the way you had to chase a carpenter or mason to get a work done.

Feedback on stories appearing in the supplement is also welcome.

*The Hindu Property Plus*

offers 'Home Blog', a column to share your observations and experiences with other readers.

Mail your suggestions, comments and inputs to *Property Plus*, *The Hindu*, Begumpet, Hyderabad-16 or email the same to 'propertyplus.hyd@thehindu.co.in'.



## Coming soon. Chennai's premier property fair.

*The Hindu* is proud to present 'Living Spaces', a property fair that showcases the best property options in town. This is the perfect opportunity for real estate builders, flat promoters, land developers and financial institutions to display their properties and services to potential buyers looking for an investment.

For details on stall space in the fair, contact Chennai: Sathish 9841962820 • Coimbatore: Togo 9843226199 • Kochi: Ansari 9895713244 • Bangalore: Vijay Dev 9886177088 • Hyderabad: Shailendar 9246156319.

Date: 29 Sept. – 2 Oct. 2012 | Venue: Chennai Trade Centre, Nandambakkam

