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Contributed by Nancy Laplante

FOR THE LOVE OF GAURA!

As a newer resident to the Eastern Shore I have been enjoying learning about new plants that will do well in my soil. One of those plants is gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*). I have challenges in my yard in terms of size (it's very small), terrible clay soil, varying degrees of drainage, and last but not least, two very loveable 85+ pound dogs who run through every plant!



Gaura is a pretty, deciduous perennial, that looks great in cottage garden style or informal plantings. I've learned that gaura plants do best when cut all the way down to the roots in the fall. They also prefer to stay put for a few years, so plant them in a place they can stay. They have a long bloom, and depending upon the type, can grow from 15 inches to 4 feet tall. Gaura have small starry flowers in white or pink, appearing from early summer right through to autumn.



They can stand up to a large dog or two running through them pretty well, and if they get a little



trampled I am finding they come back as their roots seem to take fairly quickly. As an added bonus, gaura attract hummingbirds to a backyard habitat garden.

They prefer full sun and loamy soils—loamy soils are a combination of three different types of soil—sand, silt, and clay. I truly have come to love this plant and look forward to many more years of enjoyment.