

## Phlox

What is to give light must endure burning.

~ Viktor Frankl

*Whats in a name:* Phlox is from the Greek word meaning ‘torch’ or ‘flame’. They are often called Sweet Williams. There are also flocks of phlox: Wedding, Garden, Creeping, Moss, Woodland and Meadow Phlox

*All in the family:* Polemoniaceae - Phlox Family; 70 species of Phlox in US including: Jacob’s Ladder, Greek Valerian; Thrift; many species of lovely ePHEmerals



*Plant a row of phlox phor the hungry:* If you’re lucky, your phlox patch will be host to the larvae of the Hummingbird Hawk-moth.

*PHASE:* After it emerges from its cocoon and starts feeding on plant nectar, it makes an audible PHRASE, humming noises, as it hovers in place.

*PHONY:* Although it is brown with orange hind wings, its PHORM certainly resembles a hummingbird when it is PHEEDING on PHLOWERS.

*Common name in Spanish:*  
Alfombrilla

*Caterpillar Café:*  
Hummingbird Hawk-moth &  
Trumpet Vine Sphinx

*Fun with phonics:* Here are some word plays using PHUN PHOnetic pronunciations...

*A veritable butterfly PHOOD buffet:* The phlox flower heads of massed tubular flowers with five PHlaring lobes are favorites for monarchs, swallowtails, painted ladies, skippers, sulphurs and fritillaries.

*Phenology in spring:* It’s easy to see how some PHENOTYPES could be named ‘torch’ or ‘flame thrower’! Some of the thrifty *thrift* cultivars could burn the corneas of our eyes on bright sunny, early spring days!

*Get out your PHOTON-blocker solar-eclipse glasses as its PHASERS are set to stun:* NPR’s hilarious plant commentator Ketzell Levine referred to clumps of early spring phlox as “screaming bloody murder, like the moss phlox that is already flowing like lava down innumerable city streets.”

*A phlox on boat your houses:* Naturalist and plant explorer John Bartram sent *Phlox paniculata* seeds and rootstock to his botanical patrons by ship to England in 1740.

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.  
~ Albert Schweitzer

*PHYSICS helps me make it through the blight:* Keeping down the dreaded powdery mildew is more PHUN if PHLOX receive PHULL sun as they PHOTOSYNTHESIZE. Hand watering is more effective than hose-watering. Thinning out stems increases air PHLOW and reduces mildew spread. Remove infected stems and PHOLIAGE so spores cannot overwinter. This would cause PHRETTING in the spring.

The PHLOEM in Phlox is popular as browse with rabbits and deer.

*PHENOMENON:* It may be the only wildflower mentioned in the Bible’s nativity story: *While shepherds watched their Phlox by night...*©

*Think outside the PHLOX:* It is native to the eastern US and Plains and was voted as national “Perennial of the Year” in 2002. It provides PHRAGRANT patches of color from July to September.



The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire.  
~Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

And... then... there’s the story of the two French Poodles ... bragging about their family lineage and purity of blood lines. One brags that her name is Mimi – spelled M-I-M-I; another brags that her name is Fifi: spelled F-I-F-I. An old hound overhears them, and not being easily impressed, he says: My name is Fido: P-H-Y-D-E-A-U-X... ☺