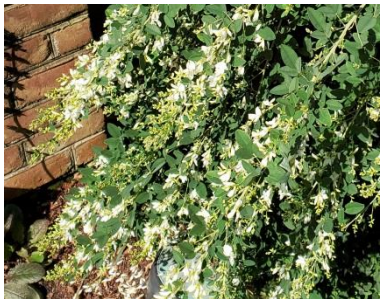









# BRIGHT SPOTS

## CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

September 16, 2019

+ Virginia Native Plant

<p><b>Robins Visitors Center – behind Shop &amp; Four Seasons Garden</b></p>	<p><b>White Bush Clover, <i>Lespedeza thunbergii</i> ‘Alba’.</b> A deciduous shrub, with arching branches of blue-green foliage and delicate white flowers, it is a member of the pea family. Like other legumes, it can fix its own nitrogen, enriching the surrounding soil. It can reach 4’-6’ wide and as tall. The “weeping” structure makes it a good choice for hillsides. The blooms attract butterflies and bees, while the plant is deer resistant. It prefers well drained soils.</p>	
<p><b>Four Seasons Garden &amp; Upper Fountain Garden</b></p>	<p><b>Popcorn Cassia, <i>Senna didymobotrya</i>.</b> Despite its tropical origins (Zones 9-11), Popcorn Cassia grows rapidly and is a spectacular addition to late summer gardens. Flower spikes, up to 1 ft. tall, feature greenish black buds and bright yellow blooms. When rubbed, the feathery leaves produce a “battered popcorn” scent. Grow in full sun and moist well-drained soils, either in soil or a large container, where it makes a great “thriller” or tall plant.</p>	
<p><b>Upper Fountain Garden &amp; Conservatory Containers</b></p>	<p><b><i>Solanum quitoense</i>, also known as Naranjilla</b> (little orange), is an exotic looking member of the tomato family. The leaves and stems are soft, wooly and covered with scary looking purple hairs/spines. Until the fruit ripens and turns orange, it is covered with a brown hairy coating for protection. In South America, the citrus tasting juice is most prized and some is even made into wine in Colombia.</p>	
<p><b>Conservatory – Front</b></p>	<p><b>Maximilian Sunflower, <i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>.</b> Maybe like its discoverer, German Prince Maximilian, this American native grows tall (6+ ft.). Its nectar is loved by bees, butterflies and birds and its seeds, roots and foliage are enjoyed by wildlife. The plant thrives - to the point of naturalizing - in full sun, just a little water and indifferent soil. Neither insects nor disease bother this herbaceous perennial as it blooms nonstop from August to November.</p>	

<p><b>Main Garden Walk &amp; Throughout</b></p>	<p><b>Bunny Tail Grass, <i>Melinis nerviglumis</i> ‘Pink Crystals’, and other ornamental grasses.</b> Now many grass genera (<i>Melinis</i>, <i>Pennisetum</i>, <i>Miscanthus</i>, and <i>Calamagrostis</i>) display plumes of flowers. Some are tropical (Bunny Tail), while others survive the winter in our Zone 7 (Fountain, Maiden and Feather Reed Grass). These clumping, low maintenance grasses grow best in full sun &amp; draining soil. Look for all, especially this cute one with its breezy rose flowers.</p>	
<p><b>Robins Visitors Center – behind Cafe; Main Garden Walk; Anderson Wildflower Meadow</b></p>	<p><b>Goldenrod, <i>Solidago sp.</i></b> Fall is “prime time” for <i>Solidago</i> (6 species, 14 locations). Look for tall, stately <i>S. canadensis</i> and the delicate sprays of <i>S. rugosa</i> ‘Fireworks’. <i>S. sphacelata</i> ‘Golden Fleece’ is more compact than the species (~1’ tall). <i>Solidago</i>’s pollen is heavy, sticky and not airborne, so it does not cause hay fever. The genus name is Latin, “to make whole”, in reference to its medicinal properties. Plants are attractive to pollinators, prefer full sun and are drought tolerant.</p>	
<p><b>Lower Asian Valley</b></p>	<p><b>Obedient Plant, <i>Physostegia virginiana</i> ‘Vivid’.</b> The bright pinkish lavender flowers of this cultivar are indeed ‘Vivid.’ The common name derives from its’ willingness to briefly retain position when the flower is pushed to one side. These long-lived flowers, which are good for cutting, provide nectar for hummingbirds and butterflies. Plants prefer moist, acidic, well-drained soil, although they will tolerate clay soil. An added benefit - it is deer resistant!</p>	
<p><b>Main Garden Walk – left side after Lotus Bridge</b></p>	<p><b>Atlas Cedar, <i>Cedrus libani subsp. Atlantica</i> ‘Glauca’,</b> may live for 1,000 or more years. This ancient species is a true cedar. It actually likes drought, heat and humidity as it grows 60-ft high. Large, upright cones (female) take two years to ripen and small (male) cones shed their pollen in fall. This blue-silver conifer retains its lower branches and nicely complements the purple plants placed in front.</p>	
<p><b>Rose Garden</b></p>	<p><b>Sweet Autumn Clematis, <i>Clematis paniculata</i>,</b> an intensely fragrant fall blooming vine, comes into its own as others in the garden fade. It is deer resistant, covered with pure white flower panicles and followed by attractive plume-like seed heads. Unlike most other species of Clematis, this one thrives in full sun and is equally happy growing as a climber or rambling as a ground cover. An aggressive self sower, the vine can become invasive if not actively managed.</p>	