









BRIGHT SPOTS

CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

January 13, 2020

+ Virginia Native Plant

<p>North Terrace & Throughout</p>	<p>Christmas Rose, <i>Helleborus niger</i> ‘Josef Lemper’ is a relative of the spring blooming Lenten Rose but blooms in December. This pure white, upward facing hybrid selection has flowers with yellow stamens and coarse evergreen dark leaves. In our warmer Virginia climate the flowers turn a pale green as they age. The blooms are long lasting, both on the plant and in arrangements, and they are unattractive to deer, rabbits and snails. Hellebores prefer partial shade and will slowly spread to create clumps.</p>	
<p>Four Seasons (outer wall), Fountain Gardens, Main Garden Walk</p>	<p><i>Cornus</i> spp. Various dogwood species shed their leaves in autumn to reveal brilliantly colored stems. Look for the bright coral stems of <i>C. sanguinea</i> ‘Winter Flame’ outside the wall of the Four Seasons Garden. Pruning out a third of the stems each winter stimulates new growth which will give constant color. Plant any one of these varieties in front of evergreens for a stunning contrast in color and texture.</p>	
<p>Four Seasons, Asian Valley, Joan van Arnum</p>	<p>Oregon Grape, <i>Mahonia x media</i> ‘Underway’ confirmed its cold hardy reputation with racemes of bright yellow flowers and glossy green foliage. The garden has several Mahonia varieties which bear blue-black fruit attractive to birds. The sharp spiny leaves make them unappealing to deer. The genus is named for Bernard McMahon, who corresponded with Thomas Jefferson, and was a horticultural steward for plant collections from the Lewis and Clark expedition.</p>	
<p>Bragdon Memorial Garden, Main Garden Walk, and throughout</p>	<p>+Winterberry, <i>Ilex verticillata</i> ‘Winter Gold’. The deciduous hollies have come into their own in the winter landscape now, showcasing bright red, gold, and coral berries. (<i>I. decidua</i> is another species you will find.) They are native to swampy areas so will not thrive if allowed to get too dry. Look along the lakeshore for examples of these small trees. The species is native to Virginia. Remember hollies are dioecious, requiring a male tree for pollination. Birds enjoy these berries, too.</p>	

<p>Conservatory, West Wing</p>	<p>Aloe, <i>Aloe humilis</i> ‘Hedgehog’. Numerous spears of stunning coral-red, nectar rich blooms are now on view above the fleshy blue-green foliage of this aloe. The leaves are studded with spikes and tend to curve into a compact ball shape, hence the evocative ‘Hedgehog’. Endemic to South Africa, this succulent is hardy in zones 9-11, but can be pot-grown indoors in our cooler climate.</p>	
<p>Opposite Grace Arents Garden</p>	<p>Winter Jasmine, <i>Jasminum nudiflorum</i> is a member of the Olive family and the hardiest of all jasmine species. One of the earliest flowering plants to bloom and even without the characteristic scent of other plants in the family, these cheery yellow star shape flowers brighten a gloomy winter day. The rambling nature of Winter Jasmine allows it to be grown as a ground cover or trained on a trellis to disguise a wall or fence. It’s not fussy about soil but performs best in full sun.</p>	
<p>Lake Walk</p>	<p>Japanese Flowering Apricot, <i>Prunus mume</i> ‘Josephine’. Long popular in Asia, this small tree of the Roseaceae family did not intrigue Americans until the 1990’s. It is ideal for small gardens in Zones 6-9, growing to ~ 20’. ‘Josephine (photo) produces spicy scented blossoms, but no edible fruit. It is disease and pest resistant. Flowering Apricots require a sunny spot, rich soil and uniform moisture. Prune after flowering to stimulate growth that will increase the number of flower buds for the following year.</p>	
<p>Streb Conifer Garden</p>	<p>Japanese Cedar, <i>Cryptomeria japonica</i> ‘Sekkan Sugi’ the national tree of Japan, is a medium sized pyramidal evergreen. Young foliage emerges a pale shade of yellow in a herringbone pattern and is a striking contrast to the deeper green of the older needles by summer. Crinkled brown cones dangle on the ends of weeping branches and the lovely bark peels away in long vertical strips. Pair with blue needled conifers or plants with bronze or burgundy leaves for a show stopping display.</p>	
<p>Main Garden Walk</p>	<p><i>Magnolia</i> x ‘Sundance’. This elegant tree is covered with fuzzy gray catkins that promise spring just when winter is getting most tedious. As the weather warms, the buds will open to large (20 cm) creamy yellow flowers which appear before the leaves. The Garden is home to a wide variety of magnolias including a large Southern Magnolia in Grace Arents’ garden that is said to have been planted by the famed Richmond garden designer, Charles Gillette.</p>	