









BRIGHT SPOTS

CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

September 21, 2020

+ Virginia Native Plant

<p>Robins Visitors Center (behind café – right side), Asian Valley & Throughout</p>	<p>+ Goldenrod, <i>Solidago</i> spp. Sometimes mistaken for ragweed, <i>Solidago</i>'s pollen is heavy, sticky and not airborne, so it does not cause hay fever. Look for <i>S. sphacelata</i> 'Golden Fleece', more compact than the species (~1' tall), and rough-goldenrod, <i>S. rugosa</i> 'Fireworks', with an airy, branching structure. Attractive to pollinators, goldenrod prefers full sun, and is drought tolerant. The genus name is Latin, "to make whole," in reference to its medicinal properties.</p>	
<p>Four Seasons & Upper Fountain Gardens</p>	<p>Bluebeard, <i>Caryopteris x clandonensis</i> 'Longwood Blue'. True blue flowers are always highly prized in the garden and this low shrub never disappoints. In the late summer, blue flowers resembling clouds of smoke grow along the stems. Brush your hand across the silver-gray foliage to release a lovely fragrance. This shrub is always covered with bees and other beneficial insects at work. It is one of their favorites too!</p>	
<p>Conservatory - Front</p>	<p>Maximilian Sunflower, <i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>. 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>Conservatory – West Side</p>	<p>Mottled Spurge or Dragon Bones, <i>Euphorbia lactea</i> 'White Ghost' doesn't appear so, but it is a shrub and not a cactus. This is due to the presence of sap (that happens to be poisonous) and the absence of large flowers. Also, unlike cacti, it is a tropical plant native to India. While Mottled Spurge can grow up to 15' in the wild, it makes a nice house plant by reaching only a foot or two. Propagation can be done by stem cuttings, but be careful of the poisonous sap.</p>	

<p>Upper Fountain Garden, Main Garden Walks & Flagler Garden</p>	<p>Stonecrop, <i>Hylotelephium</i> spp. These clumping perennials (formerly in the genus <i>Sedum</i>), provide multi-season interest. Sturdy stems support fleshy leaves and domed flower heads (cymes) that resemble broccoli. Masses of pink star-like flowers emerge from white buds and gracefully age to a coppery rust, providing winter interest. ‘Autumn Charm’ (photo) is one of the 12+ species and cultivars in the Garden’s collection. Plants attract butterflies and are happy in dry conditions.</p>	
<p>Flagler Garden – Joan Van Arnum Walk & Throughout</p>	<p>Japanese Windflower, <i>Anemone hupehensis</i>, is a native of the Chinese province Hupeh. Victorian plant hunter Robert Fortune introduced it to Europe in 1844. This perennial is anchored by a basal rosette of dark green leaves and has shallow saucer-like flowers in pink or white, single or double, which sway in the breeze at the end of long wiry stems. Plant in a protected location with soft shade and moist fertile soil.</p>	
<p>Lower Asian Valley</p>	<p>+ Obedient Plant, <i>Physostegia virginiana</i> ‘Vivid’. 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>Flagler Garden</p>	<p>Fountain Grass, <i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i> ‘National Arboretum’. Beside the stream in Flagler, clumps of <i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i> ‘National Arboretum’ display dramatic dark seed heads. (<i>Penna</i> is from the Latin, “feather” and <i>seta</i>, “bristle”, is an accurate description.) All of these grasses require less water than our traditional lawn grasses. And, while “low maintenance” does not mean “no maintenance”, most of them need cutting only once a season.</p>	
<p>Healing Garden, Asian Valley, West Island & Dot’s Garden</p>	<p>+ Beautyberry, <i>Callicarpa americana</i>. This native, deciduous shrub thrives in moist soil enriched with organic matter. Beautyberry grows in full sun or partial shade but will flower and fruit better with more sun. In late summer, the shrub’s insignificant flowers give way to stunning fruits (drupes) that start out green and ripen to bright violet. The plants are best sited at the back of the bed and are said to bear more fruit when several are planted together.</p>	