

# BRIGHT SPOTS

## CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

January 20, 2021

### + Virginia Native Plant

### \* Location of Bright Spot Sign

<p><b>North Terrace, *Asian Valley &amp; Throughout</b></p>	<p><b><i>Helleborus cv.</i></b> are commonly called Lenten Rose or Christmas rose, depending on the species. The cupped flowers, subtly colored green, white, purple or cream, open on 2- to 3-inch stems. The blooms are long lasting, both on the plant and, when cut early in the blooming season, in arrangements. Hellebores prefer partial shade and fertile soil, will slowly spread to create clumps and will produce seedlings near the mother plants. Hellebores are unattractive to deer, rabbits and snails.</p>	
<p><b>Four Seasons Garden, Fountain Gardens, *Main Garden Walk</b></p>	<p><b><i>Cornus spp.</i></b> Various shrub type dogwood species shed their leaves in autumn to reveal brilliantly colored stems of yellow, coral or red. The Garden hosts several examples. Look for the fiery stems of <i>C. sanguinea</i> 'Midwinter Fire' on the upper Main Garden Walk. Pruning out a third of the older stems each winter stimulates new growth, guaranteeing vibrant color in the following year. Plant any one of these varieties in front of evergreens for a stunning contrast in color and texture.</p>	
<p><b>*Four Seasons, Asian Valley, Joan van Arnum &amp; Throughout</b></p>	<p><b>Oregon Grape, <i>Mahonia x media</i> 'Underway'</b> 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><b>Bragdon Memorial Garden, Main Garden Walk, *Lake Walk below the Meadow &amp; Throughout</b></p>	<p><b>+Winterberry, <i>Ilex</i> 'Sparkleberry'.</b> 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><b>Conservatory, *West Wing</b></p>	<p><b>Aloe, <i>Aloe humilis</i> ‘Hedgehog’.</b> 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><b>*West Island, Flagler Garden and Lake Walk</b></p>	<p><b>+ River Birch, <i>Betula nigra</i> cv.</b> Shaggy, papery bark peels back to reveal a cinnamon brown trunk, enhancing the winter landscape. River Birches, native to the Eastern US, are useful for planting in wet soil, along ponds and streams and are valuable for erosion control. Host to more than 400 species of butterflies, birches support songbirds and other native fauna. <i>B. nigra</i> ‘Bnmtf’ Dura-heat™ found in West Island is more tolerant of our hot, humid summer than the species.</p>	
<p><b>*Flagler Garden</b></p>	<p><b>Needle Palm, <i>Rhapidophyllum hystrix</i>,</b> is an evergreen, clumping fan palm characterized by long, sharp needles along the trunk. One of the toughest cold-hardy palms, it can survive Virginia’s winters and frozen precipitation. Native to the wet bottomlands of the SE US, these plants often form massive clumps which are almost impenetrable to wildlife. Slow growing Needle Palms are highly adaptable to varying soils and sunlight and can provide a tropical feel to porches, patios and gardens.</p>	
<p><b>*Lake Walk below the Meadow, Upper Fountain &amp; Throughout</b></p>	<p><b>Grasses.</b> There are many grasses (as well as other plants) that dry to a new beauty in winter. This photo illustrates <i>Calamagrostis brachytricha</i>, an ornamental reed grass hardy to zones 4-9 and, unlike other grasses, it grows well in moist clay soil. Monochromatic in winter, its late summer plumes are pink atop bright green leaves, attracting songbirds and other admirers.</p>	
<p><b>*Main Garden Walk, Front Entrance</b></p>	<p><b><i>Magnolia</i> ‘Sundance’.</b> An example of a deciduous magnolia, 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 over 100 varieties of magnolias. Another example of deciduous magnolia, <i>M.</i> ‘Luscious’ can be found at the front entrance.</p>	