





BRIGHT SPOTS



CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

February 23, 2021

+ Virginia Native Plant

*Location of Bright Spots Sign

<p>North Terrace, Asian Valley, *Flagler Garden & Throughout</p>	<p>Helleborus cv. 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>Four Seasons Garden, Fountain Gardens, *Main Garden Walk</p>	<p>Cornus spp. 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>*Medicinal Garden</p>	<p>Rosemary, <i>Salvia rosmarinus</i> (syn. <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>) is a bushy, evergreen shrub with intensely fragrant, needle-like leaves and purple-blue flowers that bloom in Spring. A Mediterranean native, Rosemary performs poorly in heavy clay soil but will thrive in full sun locations with good drainage. Officinalis means "sold in stores", denoting a useful plant. Rosemary flowers and leaves are harvested for culinary flavoring, sachets and toiletries. Royal Horticulture Society Award of Garden Merit winner.</p>	
<p>*Asian Valley</p>	<p>Himalayan Pine, <i>Pinus wallichiana</i> 'Zebrina' is a stunning evergreen with long, drooping green needles banded with creamy yellow. The botanist Nathaniel Wallich introduced seeds of the species to England in 1827. It is native to high mountain valleys (6000'-12,000') where it can reach 150' tall. In cultivation it is still majestic at 50' with a stately pyramidal habit. This variegated cultivar would make a fine specimen for larger properties that can provide well drained acidic soil.</p>	

<p>*Conservatory Dome House</p>	<p>Calamondin Orange, × <i>Citrofortunella macrocarpa</i>. The miniature orange-like fruit are beautiful to look at but sour to eat. Like a kumquat, the skin is sweet but the fruit less so. In fact, this citrus may be a cross between a mandarin and a kumquat. As a potted plant, it resides outside in the summer but needs the warmth and frost protection of the Conservatory during winter. In bloom, this beauty has white fragrant flowers.</p>	
<p>*Conservatory – West Wing</p>	<p>Ponytail Palm, Elephant’s Foot, <i>Beaucarnea recurvata</i> (syn. <i>Nolina recurvata</i>) is an Agave masquerading as a palm. It is native to semi-desert areas of Mexico and Central America. As the plant matures, the base (caudex) swells to a bulbous shape (elephant’s foot) used for storing water. The long strap-shaped, leathery leaves drape sinuously down the plant, and hence ‘ponytail’. It is very slow growing and drought tolerant, making it an ideal houseplant.</p>	
<p>* Lower Asian Valley</p>	<p>Persian Ironwood, <i>Parrotia persica</i>. The common name refers to the tree’s strong, close-grained wood. A small lawn tree, street tree (tolerating air pollution) or wind barrier, we note it now because you can appreciate its multiple and architectural branch formation arising from a single, exfoliating trunk. You don’t notice this when the tree has thick green summer foliage or colorful fall leaves. It is native to the Middle East and is in the witch hazel family.</p>	
<p>*Lake Walk, both sides</p>	<p>Japanese Apricot, <i>Prunus mume</i> ‘Dawn’. Long popular in Asia for its early bloom, the species was introduced to America in 1911. Ideal for small gardens in Zones 6-9, growing to ~ 20, it is disease and pest resistant. ‘Dawn’ is noted for its double pink flowers; other cultivars can display white, red, purple or even light green blooms. Flowering Apricots require a sunny spot, rich soil and uniform moisture.</p>	
<p>West Island, *Constructed Wetland</p>	<p>Swamp Cypress, Bald Cypress, <i>Taxodium distichum</i> is a deciduous conifer. Its soft, green, needle-like foliage turns glorious bronze in the fall before dropping to the ground, hence “bald”. The stark winter landscape reveals conical structures called “knees” growing from the roots. Their purpose is largely unknown but knees may help to stabilize these tall trees (~100ft) in their damp environment. Native Americans repurposed larger “knees” as bee hives.</p>	