

# BRIGHT SPOTS

## CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

August 23, 2021

### + Virginia Native Plant

### \*Location of Bright Spots Sign

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| <p><b>* Four Seasons Garden</b></p>   | <p><b>Golden lace, <i>Patrinia scabiosifolia</i>.</b> Acquired in 2018, this plant began its new season in June with its nascent rise of 3-6 ft. thin stems balancing yellow inflorescent flowers. Come September, yellow seed heads develop and the foliage turns bronze. Loving our sun, heat and humidity, and enticing pollinators galore, this long-blooming Asian perennial is a boon to August gardens, is low-maintenance, makes a lasting cut flower and even self-seeds.</p>                       |    |
| <p><b>* Healing Garden, Constructed Wetland, Wildflower Meadow</b></p>                        | <p><b>+ Common evening primrose, <i>Oenothera biennis</i>,</b> produces lemon scented yellow flowers on dramatically tall stems from a basal rosette of lance shaped leaves. The flower stem appears only in the second year, as the species name (biennial) implies. The blooms open at dusk and close by midday. They are chiefly pollinated by night flying moths. All parts of the plant are edible; it was used medicinally by Native Americans. The seed oil is available as a dietary supplement.</p> |   |
| <p><b>Four Seasons Garden, Upper Fountain Gardens, *Main Garden Walk &amp; Throughout</b></p> | <p><b>Canna lily, <i>Canna indica</i>.</b> Despite their diverse leaf and flower pigments, one can easily identify these tall, sub-tropical plants because the stalks of complex flowers arise above large, thick elliptical leaves. Pictured here is RHS award-winning 'Phasion' (also marketed as Tropicanna® canna) with its wild coloration. The rhizomes and leaves are edible, the seeds were used in jewelry and the flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies.</p>                                |  |
| <p><b>* Upper Fountain Triangle Beds</b></p>  | <p><b>Balloon flower, <i>Gomphocarpus physocarpus</i>,</b> a member of the milkweed family, is grown in Richmond as a seasonal annual. This tall, back of the border plant is a source of nectar for monarch butterflies and is pollinated by wasps and hornets. Clusters of insignificant creamy vanilla scented flowers are followed by odd looking fruit that resembles spiny, lime green balloons. Dried, these seed pods are handsome additions to floral arrangements.</p>                             |  |

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| <p><b>Conservatory Ponds</b></p>   | <p><b>Santa Cruz water lily, <i>Victoria cruziana</i>.</b> The huge floating leaves of this tropical water lily look like round trays with turned up edges. Leaves can reach 4'-6' across. Note the thorns rimming the bottom edge (and underside). Their strong pineapple-scented blooms last only two nights, opening white the first night and pink the second. The flowers are pollinated by water beetles that get trapped when the flower closes in the evening. Visit early in the morning to catch ours open.</p>    |    |
| <p><b>* Healing Garden, Asian Valley, West Island, Main Garden Walk</b></p>                | <p><b>+ Beautyberry, <i>Callicarpa americana</i>.</b> A native, this 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>                      |    |
| <p><b>Upper Fountain Triangle beds, *Constructed Wetland Wildflower Meadow</b></p>         | <p><b>+ New York ironweed, <i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>,</b> is a tall, upright perennial in the aster family with purple, cotton ball flowers. It is native along the East Coast, growing best in sunny, moist areas. The common name could be due to its tough nature and rust-colored seeds. Its botanical name gives tribute to English botanist Wm. Vernon who collected the plant in 1698. Being a native, the plant has no disease or insect issues, is loved by bees and enhances late summer cottage gardens.</p> |   |
| <p><b>* Main Garden Walk, Asian Valley, Flagler Garden &amp; Throughout</b></p>            | <p><b>Japanese windflower, <i>Anemone hupehensis</i>,</b> 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><b>* Main Garden Walk, Flagler Garden, Lucy Payne Minor Garden &amp; Throughout</b></p> | <p><b>Panicle hydrangea, <i>Hydrangea paniculata</i>,</b> blooms on new growth and therefore appears now, late in the season. Find the pure white 'Ilvobo' (in Minor), and also look for other cultivars such as the pink-tinted 'Interhydia' Pink Diamond (Main Garden Walk) and the greenish 'Limelight' (Flagler). This species survives wide temperature ranges and is the most sun tolerant of the genus. While not pH dependent for color, expect blooms to age to pink when in full sun.</p>                          |  |