

BRIGHT SPOTS

CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

September 27, 2021

+ Virginia Native Plant

*Location of Bright Spots Sign

<p>*Four Seasons Garden, Upper Fountain Garden</p>	<p>Bluebeard, <i>Caryopteris × 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>Anderson Meadow Gardens and Throughout</p>	<p>+ Goldenrod, <i>Solidago</i>. Sometimes mistaken for ragweed, <i>Solidago</i>’s pollen is heavy, sticky and not airborne, so it does not cause hay fever. At its peak now, look for the airy drifts of goldenrod across the hillside in the Anderson Meadow where it mingles amiably with other fall blooms. 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 Garden, Robins Visitor Center Rear</p>	<p>White bush clover, <i>Lespedeza thunbergii</i> ‘Alba’. A deciduous shrub with arching branches of blue-green foliage and delicate white flowers, it is a member of the pea family. Like other legumes, it can fix its own nitrogen, enriching the surrounding soil. It can reach 4’-6’ wide and as tall. The “weeping” structure makes it a good choice for hillsides. The blooms attract butterflies and bees, while the plant is deer resistant. It prefers well drained soils.</p>	
<p>*Healing Gardens, Asian Valley, West Island, Children’s Garden, Main Garden Walk</p>	<p>+ Beautyberry, <i>Callicarpa americana</i>. 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>*Healing Gardens</p>	<p>Roselle, <i>Hibiscus sabdariffa</i> displays bright red buds just opening to yellow blooms against lime green leaves on upright stems. A native of Africa, it is widely used for its medicinal properties. Beverages made from the fruits are high in vitamin C; the leaves are edible and the stems provide a jute-like fiber. Certainly, the dramatic color this shrub delivers makes it just as valuable as a garden highlight.</p>	
<p>*Asian Valley and Cherry Tree Walk</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>*Main Garden Walk, Asian Valley, Flagler Garden & 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>*Main Garden Walk</p>	<p>Dragon’s eye pine, <i>Pinus densiflora</i> ‘Oculus Draconis’, is named for the view from above: the dark red terminal bud is surrounded by alternating concentric green and white bands on each needle - resembling a dragon’s eye. While we don’t have that perspective, look for this small tree on a fall morning, as its unique variegation is backlit by the sun & at its best. The irregular shape adds to the sense of movement and wonder.</p>	
<p>*Main Garden Walk</p>	<p>Aster, <i>Kalimeris mongolica</i>. Although this type of aster comes from the Far East, it acts as though it belongs in Virginia. Without any special attention, the bushy 3’ plant covers itself with white button flowers from spring through autumn, when it slowly goes dormant for the winter. Divide it in half and you’ll have a 2nd healthy plant for another garden spot. In sun or part shade, kalimeris is the perfect plant to fill out your garden.</p>	