

# BRIGHT SPOTS

## CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

November 15, 2021

### + Virginia Native Plant

### \*Location of Bright Spots Sign

<p><b>Entrance Terrace &amp; Throughout</b></p>	<p><b>Blue star, <i>Amsonia hubrichtii</i></b>, with its pale blue flowers, may be a star in the spring garden but its second act in the fall is the real showstopper. The cooler temperatures trigger the feathery thread-like foliage to turn a brilliant gold, edging to brassy orange. Comfortable in full sun to part shade and deer resistant, blue star would be a welcome addition to a rain garden or pollinator plot.</p>	
<p><b>East &amp; West Upper Fountain Gardens &amp; Throughout</b></p>	<p><b>+Grasses.</b> Previously, grasses were associated with lawns, pastures and cereal grains. Now, they are used to provide texture and interest to a garden almost year-round. In sun or rain, the nativar white muhly grass (<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i> 'White Cloud'), pictured here, is a firecracker of light as its puffs of long white inflorescences sway in the wind. Try it as the thriller in your winter container for a display that will delight all season long.</p>	
<p><b>Conservatory - Dome</b></p>	<p><b>Orchid, <i>Vanda Kulwadee Fragrance</i></b>. It's difficult to determine which is more spectacular: the round, purple-speckled blossoms or the numerous dangling roots. Breeders cross different vanda orchids to create hybrids, such as this one, in a range of patterns and colors. They are epiphytes, adapted to soilless growing conditions with aerial roots that are surrounded by a layer of velamen which aids in moisture absorption and retention. These vanda orchids require sunny warm (55°- 95°) environments with high humidity (80%).</p>	
<p><b>Conservatory - West Wing on the Cottage</b></p>	<p><b>Dutchman's pipe, <i>Aristolochia</i></b> is a vigorous woody vine that climbs and twines up and over the cottage. Subtropical but winter hardy, it brings welcome shade to porches and pergolas. The dense, overlapping, dark green leaves almost hide the distinctive flowers mottled with yellow and purple. The flower's strong scent attracts insects to the hairy central tube - when the hairs die, the pollen-covered fly is released. Some species are butterfly host plants.</p>	

<p><b>Asian Valley Garden &amp; Throughout</b></p>	<p><b>Fall foliage</b>, especially this year, is as colorful as spring flowers and arguably more dramatic. Pictured here are the primary colors of the yellowing hornbeams and red maples, set against the blue sky. The tinges of orange are offset by the evergreen shrubs. While some plants have shed their leaves, we still have time to enjoy the changing leaf colors on our ginkgo, crape myrtle, beech and oak trees.</p>	
<p><b>Asian Valley, Flagler, Lucy Payne Minor &amp; Streb Conifer Gardens</b></p>	<p><b><i>Camellia sasanqua</i></b>. This species of camellias blooms in the autumn. Differing from the late winter blooming <i>C. japonica</i>, these plants are shorter, have smaller and serrated leaves and bloom more delicate flowers. Pictured here is a pink double variety in the Asian Valley Garden. The shrub is drought tolerant, likes full-to-partial sun in a rich soil and can be used as a hedge or pruned to a tree-form. Camellias in a range of colors and contours are blooming now.</p>	
<p><b>Asian Valley</b></p>	<p><b>Kaki, <i>Diospyros kaki</i> 'Korean'</b> has fruited abundantly this season. Large, bright orange globes (3"-4") are weighing down the branches of this medium sized tree. Not simply decorative, these persimmons are sweet and edible. It is fully ripe when it becomes soft, usually after the leaves have dropped. Native to China, it has been cultivated there for centuries. Our native, <i>D. virginiana</i>, bears smaller fruit (1"-2"), also edible.</p>	
<p><b>Asian Valley and West Island Gardens, Lake Walk</b></p>	<p><b>Swamp cypress, bald cypress, <i>Taxodium distichum</i></b> is a deciduous conifer. Its soft, green, needle-like foliage turns glorious bronze (center tree) at this time of year before dropping to the ground, hence "bald". Look for clusters of cones the color of oxidized copper. These large trees (to 100') develop hollow conical structures from the roots that may help to stabilize the tree in its damp environment. Native Americans repurposed larger "knees" as beehives.</p>	
<p><b>Lake Walk</b></p>	<p><b>+Winterberry, <i>Ilex verticillata</i></b>, is a native deciduous shrub that produces brightly colored berries that will persist into winter (hence the common name) and provides food for our feathered friends. <i>Verticillata</i> is Latin for "whorled" and refers to the arrangement of the berries around the stems. The females produce the berries and male plants are needed for pollination. Look for this 'Winter Red' cultivar and for the golden variety around the Garden.</p>	