

BRIGHT SPOTS

CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

February 7, 2022

+ Virginia Native Plant

Is there anything to see in the garden at this time of year? Buds, blooms, and berries! Oh my! Come get your steps in while viewing our winter show stoppers: Christmas and Lenten rose in colors from creamy ivory to deepest purple found in swaths throughout; paperbush with leafless branches sporting white buds drooping from bare branches; holly and nandina's bright red and yellow berries lighting up dark green shade; magnolia's velvety buds sparkling in a variety of silvery colors and sizes. Keep your nose on alert, as many winter bloomers will signal pollinators with a heady fragrance. If you get too chilly, do stop in to see the glorious collection of colorful blooms, buds and berries in the Conservatory.



+Possumhaw viburnum, *Viburnum nudum* 'Bulk' Brandywine™, found along the edge of **Morton Native Garden**, is arresting at all times of the year. Now we see intensely blue clusters of edible berries without the distraction of leaves. Smell the perfumed white flowers in spring, the evolving berry colors in late summer and the foliage display in fall. Introduced by Dutchman Mark Bulk, this compact cultivar has everything going for it.



Winter daphne, *Daphne odora*. A native of Asia, these are small shrubs with dark glossy, leathery leaves and intensely fragrant reddish-purple flowers. Best grown in moist, rich, well-drained soil and part shade to shade. Full VA sun will burn foliage and wet soil will rot roots. Plant it near entrances and walkways where the fragrance can be enjoyed. Can be temperamental to grow but worth the effort. **Entrance Fountain Terrace and Flagler Garden**



Species and hybrids in the genus *Helleborus* are commonly called Christmas rose or Lenten rose, depending on the type. 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 in arrangements. Deceptively, all parts of the beautiful hellebores are toxic if consumed. Deer, rabbits and snails know this and avoid the plants - allowing them to spread by roots and seedlings. **Asian Valley, Flagler Garden & throughout**





Paperbush, *Edgeworthia chrysantha*, now is heralding spring as it sports clusters of tiny cream and gold trumpets dangling from dark bare branches. When fully open, the blooms will fill the air with fragrance, alerting winter pollinators to a feast. The inner bark once was used to make paper, hence the common name. This shrub will do well in VA when provided with some shade and rich soil. **Asian Valley**



INVASIVE! - Heavenly bamboo, *Nandina domestica*. Shrubs with all season interest are desirable in any garden. But for an **exotic invasive** plant like nandina that plan is all wrong. Invasives often grow aggressively in their adopted homes, outcompete natives, decrease diversity and negatively impact wildlife. Sadly, many are still sold, so it's a good idea to check a reputable database like invasivespeciesinfo.gov. Native sweetshrub, inkberry or American beautyberry are good substitutes for nandina. **Throughout**



+Yellow fruited American holly, *Ilex opaca f. xanthocarpa*. This moderately tall, evergreen holly is a female clone that produces brilliant yellow berries following the summer pollination from a neighboring male tree. Named the 2018 Holly of the Year by the Holly Society of America, it bears rich green leaves and fruit loved by wintering robins and bluebirds. Generally disease-free, the tree grows well in VA. **Flagler**



Magnolia 'Sundance'. This deciduous tree found along the **Main Garden Walk** is covered with fuzzy gray catkins that, as the weather warms, will reveal buds that will open to large creamy yellow flowers before the leaves unfold. Throughout the Garden you can find an extensive variety of magnolias from the grand evergreen southern magnolia to hybrids of every size.

