

BRIGHT SPOTS

CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

March 22, 2022

+ Virginia Native Plant

*Location of Bright Spots Sign

Despite the erratic weather in the Garden these last few weeks, spring marches on! Daffodils continue their cheery show and have been joined by smaller companions like the hyacinths in the Grace Arents Garden, the pale blue spring starflowers along the base of the cherry arbor in Four Seasons Garden and the spikes of muscari in shades of blue and purple throughout. No need to travel to DC as we are having our own Cherry Blossom festival with the emerging Yoshino and weeping cherry trees. Woody shrubs are waking up, bringing lovely color and fragrance to the garden much to the delight of pollinators and guests alike.



Flowering cherry, *Prunus* ‘Snofozam’ Snow Fountains® is an ornamental cherry with showy white blossoms and a weeping habit, hence “Snow Fountains”. It is slow growing; the trees espaliered on our arbor were planted in 2000. Bees now are busy pollinating, but the developing small, black fruit is inedible. In autumn the leaves turn shades of gold and orange. Full sun provides protection against the many diseases and insect pests that are prone to attack this genus. ***The Arbor in Four Seasons**



+**Fothergilla, *Fothergilla gardenii***. Frothy white flowers, without petals, characterize this native shrub (SE USA). The showy male flower, made of stamens, is above the plainer female flower. Pollinators flock to the honey-scented bloom. Fothergilla’s blue-green leaves turn orange-red in the fall. Plant this small shrub (3 ft. x 3 ft.) in a sunny place with well-drained rich acidic soil. ***Bragdon Garden**



Pearlbush, *Exochorda* × *macrantha* ‘The Bride’. This Asian shrub in the rose family sparkles with bride-white flowers set against luscious green leaves. The buds resemble pearls, adding to the wedding image. Pest and disease-free, tolerant of heat and drought, in sun this plant can grow to 4x4’. Prune for shape just following blooms. Received the Award of Garden Merit by the RHS. ***Opposite Bragdon Garden, by the KEC**





Camellia, *Camellia japonica*, continues to bloom. This evergreen, long-lived and bird-friendly shrub blossoms before the leaves from neighboring deciduous trees emerge. Plant it in a shady spot, in well-drained acidic soil. Look for the various flower forms (single, double, anemone) and colors (white, red, rose and variegated). ***Asian Valley & throughout**



Yoshino cherry, *Prunus × yeodensis*. For a few weeks, this ornamental tree presents a stunning contrast between its graceful dark limbs and its fluffy, light pink racemes. The fragrant flowers rain down as its leaves exchange places. A favorite in hometown Tokyo, a DC attraction since Japan's 1912 donation of 3000 trees, and a showstopper at the Garden, this hybrid cherry grows 30-40' tall & wide and affords a canopy for bulbs and perennials. **Main Garden Walk & throughout**



Winter hazel, *Corylopsis sinensis* var. *calvescens* is in the same family as our native witch hazel (Hamamelidaceae), but sports much showier, although not fragrant, clusters of yellow flowers. It is a multi-stemmed shrub (10'-15' tall). The group along the ***Flagler Garden** path was accessioned in 1990. It prefers acidic, well-drained soils in sun to part-shade. This particular cultivar received the RHS Award of Garden Merit.



Crabapple, *Malus*, is a small deciduous tree, valuable in the garden for its showy, fragrant flowers that emerge in spring just as the leaves are unfolding. The buds are dark pink and flowers are white or shades of pink. Autumn brings clusters of apple-like fruit. The fruit often persists into the winter long after the leaves have fallen and is an excellent source of food for birds. The fruit makes a tasty jelly or cider but is too tart to eat out of hand. ***Cherry Tree Walk**



Japanese flowering quince, *Chaenomeles japonica* and **flowering quince, *C. speciosa***. These plants are located in the **Asian Valley** ('Contorta') and in the ***Lucy Payne Minor Memorial Garden** (the large white 'Toyo-Nishiki' and the apricot-colored 'Cameo' - pictured). Native to Japan & China, they begin to flower before, and as, the leaves develop, and the fruits (used to make jam) then will follow. Very attractive right now, the blossoms attract bees and hummingbirds.

