

BRIGHT SPOTS

CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

July 25, 2022

+ Virginia Native Plant

Richmond is sizzling in the heat that's plaguing much of the country now. But a stroll through the Garden doesn't have to leave you breathless. Many of our favorite spots in the Garden give a visitor the opportunity to enjoy a cooling breeze or catch the sight and sounds of water. There is abundant shade and benches for rest or contemplation are strategically placed throughout. Stop by Bloemendaal House or the Children's Garden for a drink from one of the water fountains or buy a bottle of cold water in the Gift Shop or Cafe. In these dog days of summer, some plants in our collections appreciate the shade as much as we do and others provide the shade for us. We have highlighted a few here.



North Terrace. The grey-green palmate leaves of the Bismarck palm, a native of South Africa, form a canopy for *Sansevieria trifasciata* 'Black Coral', whose sword-shaped leaves cover savannahs. Hundreds of fancy-leaved hybrid caladiums, such as 'Miss Muffet', grace southern gardens – their ancestors came from Brazil. The trailing pink fan-shaped scaevola flowers are found across Australia. Blooming lotus, often revered for longevity and purity, fill the constructed water feature. Their relatives clog lakes and slow-moving rivers throughout southeast Asia.



Crape myrtle, *Lagerstroemia indica*, likes it HOT! Heat and drought resistant, this southern garden favorite is a multi-stemmed upright deciduous tree that offers interest all year. Summer blooms resembling crepe paper in white, pink or lavender persist into fall. As the autumn golden leaves drop, peeling bark reveals a smooth cinnamon colored trunk. Look up high to see the blooms on the towering cultivar 'Natchez' shading the **Joan Van Arnam Azalea Walk in Flagler Garden**. Smaller dwarf cultivars are also available to fit your garden. **Located throughout.**



Japanese spirea, *Spiraea japonica* 'Anthony Waterer' is a compact shrub with deep pink blooms lasting into September. Among the last of the spiraeas to flower, this easy plant has many uses including the mass planting here, under the crape myrtles. The foliage undergoes many color changes, butterflies love the flowers, the plant is heat tolerant and there are few growing challenges - making this a choice garden plant for Virginia. **Steps to the Conservatory.**





+ **Brown-eyed Susan, yellow coneflower, *Rudbeckia***. Look for the more than 15 different species in the Garden, many of which are Virginia natives and some with green eyes. These hardy perennials are quick to grow, long-blooming, self-seeding, medicinal and attractive to bees and birds. They like our hot humid weather - so much that they regrow every summer. **Throughout.**



Louise Cochrane Rose Garden. The belvedere at the foot of the lawn terrace is the perfect venue to appreciate the rose garden. Take a seat on one of the benches for a view of the climbing roses that wend their way up the columns. *Rosa* 'Nahema', pictured here, is a gorgeous pink climber that does not disappoint. Other climbers like *R.* 'New Dawn' are paired with clematis for a show stopping spring display. The adjacent patio is a performing arts venue and popular wedding location.



+ **Joe Pye weed, *Eutrochium* (formerly *Eupatorium*)**. Domes of mauve-purple, and also white, flowers are filled with nectar and pollen and attract many pollinators including monarch butterflies and honeybees. This herbaceous perennial is deer resistant and works well in borders and naturalized areas. Garden Explorer lists more than ten varieties which can be easily grown in full to partial shade and moist soils – keep their feet wet! **Throughout.**



Frangipani, *Plumeria*. Visit in the early morning or evening to enjoy the fragrant blooms, whose scent resembles rose, citrus and cinnamon. Originating in Central and South America, plumeria is now featured in tropical gardens world-wide (USDA Zone 10 +). It is cultivated for its essential oils and blooms, which are used in leis, hair ornaments and religious ceremonies. Take care – the branches and trunk ooze a toxic white latex. Two pots opposite **Flagler Pavilion.**



The sunny **Grace Arents Garden** can be appreciated in the cool of the gazebo or on chairs shaded by the ancient ginkgo tree. Dramatic coral canna lilies contrast with the small red gomphrena blossoms while pink zinnias & dahlias are grouped among soft grasses, white purslane, ornamental onion, rosemary, lamb's ears, roses, lantana, pentas & more. Summer is the time to join the Garden's many after-hours' festivities in this lovely setting.

