

# BRIGHT SPOTS

## CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

August 21, 2022

### + Virginia Native Plant

While colorful blooms still predominate in the garden at this time of year there are plants of interest that are hiding in plain sight. An example is the stately oaks that line the walkway in front of the Kelly Education Center. These *Quercus lyrata* 'QLFTB' Highbeam™, known more commonly as overcup oak, were planted in 2004. They look identical to each other because they are genetically identical, grown from cuttings taken from one parent tree. This means that they should grow at the same rate, leaf out in unison and turn color together. They have a rather vertical habit with upswept branches and this contributes to the formal and unifying effect they bring to the Central Garden. They also purify the air, prevent soil erosion in heavy rain, and shelter and shade humans, animals and insects. To find out more about the ecological benefits of oaks, and, perhaps, a cultivar for your garden, read "Oaks for Everyone" in *The American Gardener*, July/August 2022, pp. 11-16, available in the Lora M. Robins Library.



**Pomegranate, *Punica granatum* var. *nana* 'Emperor'**, now displays both flower and fruit. This dwarf plant in the **Four-Seasons Garden** will grow to 2-4' tall. It is a perennial that grows well in sunny, well-drained soil. It also can make a handsome summer container plant to be overwintered indoors. The fruit and seeds, larger on the Garden's other specimens, have numerous health benefits. This particular cultivar, however, can be shaped to an elegant tree-form bonsai.



**Golden lace, *Patrinia scabiosifolia***. Acquired in 2018, this plant has been returning every year with its rise of 3-6' thin stems balancing yellow inflorescent flowers. Come September, yellow seed heads develop and the foliage turns bronze. Loving our sun, heat and humidity, and enticing pollinators galore, this long-blooming Asian perennial is a boon to our August gardens, attracts butterflies & pollinators, is low-maintenance, makes a lasting cut flower and even self-seeds without being invasive. **Four Seasons Garden.**



**Stonecrop, *Hylotelephium* (syn. *Sedum*)**, is a succulent herbaceous perennial that is beginning its autumn show. While forgiving of drought and poor rocky soil, all sedums need sun and good drainage. They range in size from creeping to 3' and in color from red to green. Here in the **Central Garden**, the *H.* 'Lajos' Autumn Charm™ has cream-edged green leaves & light green flowers that will turn pink. Cut off a stem in the spring and you can root another plant.







**Angel trumpet, *Brugmansia***, is a plant of dramatic proportions. It is native to the tropical areas of South America where it can reach 20' tall. In chillier climates it can be grown into a splendid specimen in pots. The example in the **Fountain Garden** has buttery trumpets dangling among the large deeply veined bright green leaves. These flowers are fragrant in the evening to attract moths, their natural pollinators. Avoid touching the plant because all parts are poisonous.



**Banana tree, *Musa acuminata* 'Dwarf Cavendish'**, is located in the west wing of the **Conservatory**. This short 8-10' plant looks like a tree yet its herbaceous "trunk" is formed from leaves. It produces normal-sized fruit, now in the green stage. The remarkable edible blossoms dangle at the ends of the stems, attract multitudes of pollinators from bees & ants to bats and form fruit if left to develop. The large leaves are used to wrap food to be steamed. A plant with many attributes.



**+ Joe Pye weed, *Eutrochium* (formerly *Eupatorium*)**. Domes of mauve, purple or 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.**



**Japanese windflower, *Anemone hupehensis***, 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. **Flagler Garden and throughout.**



**Panicle hydrangea, *Hydrangea paniculata***, blooms on new growth and therefore appears now, late in the season. Find the pure white 'Ilvobo' and also look for other cultivars such as the pink-tinted 'Interhydia' Pink Diamond and the greenish 'Limelight'. This species survives wide temperature ranges and is the most sun tolerant of the genus. While not pH dependent for color, expect blooms to age to pink when in full sun. **Lucy Payne Minor Garden and throughout.**

