

BRIGHT SPOTS

CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

October 16, 2023

“+” Denotes a Virginia Native Plant

Have you succumbed to the lure of pots full of yellow & rust chrysanthemums on display everywhere? You can slide them into a cachepot to brighten up areas of your garden, but it is also a perfect time to plant them if you'd like to add them permanently. The cooler temperatures slow bloom and foliage production but the ground is still warm enough to encourage root growth. Pay attention to soil preparation. If you have heavy clay (not uncommon in this area) amend your soil using compost or other garden soil mixtures and loosen the root ball. If you simply dig a hole and pop the plant into it you can create a “pot bound” situation without having a pot. Please your pollinators and cool your color palette by selecting some native blue asters. (see below)



Anemone × ‘Honorine Jobert’

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. Once established, this plant easily spreads by its rhizomes; you can divide and give away many. **Main Garden Walk & throughout.**



Anemone × ‘Honorine Jobert’



Ilex verticillata ‘Winter Red’ in the Central Garden

+Winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*, is a native deciduous shrub that produces a crop of brightly colored red, orange or pale-yellow berries that will persist into winter (hence the common name) and provides food for our feathered friends. Verticillata is Latin for “whorled” and refers to the arrangement of the berries around the stems. ‘Winter Red’ is a female cultivar noted for its heavy fruiting; a male holly is required for pollination. You can discover all colors around the Garden. **Central Garden and Cherry Tree Walk.**



Chaste tree, *Vitex agnus-castus* ‘Shoal Creek’. The delicate aroma of the textured foliage and the butterfly-attracting spikes of lavender flowers make *Vitex* a garden favorite. The spreading form of this small tree, up to 10’ wide and 20’ tall, can make it invasive. Control by pruning in winter, or even cutting to the ground. Spring sprouts will grow vigorously and produce late-summer blooms. Plant in a sunny location, do not over-fertilize and water at the roots to reduce potential fungal infections. **Healing Garden.**





Coreopsis palustris ‘Summer Sunshine’ is one of the only fall blooming coreopsis, displaying bright yellow flowers for about 6 weeks in late September through October. It has a dense habit and the foliage is disease resistant. It is not fussy about soil, but it does need full sun. It has a slow spreading habit. In addition to a pretty blooming plant for your garden, it is also an important late season food source for pollinators. **Fountain Garden East.**



‘Raydon’s Favorite’ in front of the Conservatory

+**Aster, *Symphotrichum oblongifolium*.** In Greek, aster means “star” and aptly describes the shape of the blooms in the family Asteraceae, which are sun-loving, drought-resistant sources of fall pollen. The numerous aster species sequentially bloom from summer to mid-fall. A native, late-flowering ‘Raydon’s Favorite’, is in bloom now. Its violet color and fragrance welcome butterflies. The bluer and more compact ‘October Skies’ is located in the **Healing Garden**. Asters also attract specialized bees and are deer & rabbit resistant.



‘Raydon’s Favorite’ in front of the Conservatory



Spiral ginger, *Costus comosus*. This Costa Rican native is a favorite of tropical gardens worldwide (USDA Zones 9-11). Deep green leaves, with fuzzy undersides, spiral around cane-like stems which grow 3 - 8’ tall. The spectacular pine-cone shaped inflorescence consists of spirally arranged red bracts which attract pollinators, including hummingbirds, to the small yellow flowers. Although spiral ginger is not used for culinary purposes, the flowers are edible and used in salads. Grow in pots and overwinter inside. **Conservatory – East Side.**



Children’s Garden

Japanese persimmon, Oriental persimmon, *Diospyros kaki* ‘Korean’ has fruited abundantly this season. Large, bright orange globes (3”-4”) are weighing down the branches of this medium sized tree. Not simply decorative, the fruit is 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, *D. virginiana*, bears smaller fruit (1”-2”), also edible. **Children’s Garden and Asian Valley.**



Children’s Garden



Rosa ‘Julia Child’

Roses, *Rosa*. And more roses - everywhere! Climbing up the Belvedere and cascading over the walls, this end of season second flush is a spectacle of color and delightful scents. One of the oldest known flowering plants in the world and the national flower of the U.S., there are over 1,000 specimens in this garden. A rose shrub also can live to be old, most notable is the *Rosa canina* in Germany that has been alive and thriving since at least A.D. 815. **Rose Garden.**



Rosa ‘Radpetals’ Fruity Petals™