

BRIGHT SPOTS

CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

February 26, 2024

“+” Denotes a Virginia Native Plant

The spear-like blades of tulips and the straplike foliage of daffodils are piercing through the soil here, announcing the return of spring and a million blooms! Even on gray and chilly days this abundance of new growth is a cheery vision. And there are blooms to admire as well, on the hardy shrubs and perennials not fazed by some low temperatures. If you happen to be fazed by them, a stop in the Conservatory for some tropical atmosphere and delightful whimsy (see below) won't fail to warm and cheer you. Soon the garden will be crowded with guests, but now is the time to visit for a bit of restorative wandering amidst relatively quiet paths.



Joan Van Arnum Walk in Flagler Garden

Hellebores, *Helleborus*. Depending on the species, hellebores have different common names such as Christmas rose, Lenten rose and stinking hellebore. The cupped flowers open above the leaves and are subtly colored green, white, purple or cream. Just coming into bloom, they are long lasting on the plant and in arrangements, if cut early in the blooming season. Hellebores prefer partial shade and fertile soil. They will slowly spread to create clumps and will produce seedlings near the mother plants. Hellebores are unattractive to deer, rabbits and snails. **Seen throughout.**



Unusual purple variety of hellebore along the Joan Van Arnum Walk



Boat orchid, *Cymbidium*. The common name of this orchid comes from the shape of its lip – large, curved, and open. The plant therefore can accommodate large pollinators such as bumblebees. Its flowers, coming in a variety of colors, are prized for their longevity, making them excellent cut flowers to use in corsages or arrangements. Unlike most plants in the genus, this orchid is semi-terrestrial and can grow both as an epiphyte or in moist, loamy soil. A native of Asia, *Cymbidium* needs bright light and cool temperatures. **East Wing of the Conservatory**



Found in the back of the Dome House in the Conservatory

Micro-Gardens. Is space a challenge? Then play with plants to create textured gardens to hang on branches, insert in large pots or place on roof tops. Use epiphytic plants - such as air plants and Spanish moss - that are specialized to obtain minerals and moisture from the air (*Tillandsia*). Stonecrops, which store water in their leaves, make great companions (Crassulaceae family). Help conserve moisture with the reindeer cup lichen, typically found in alpine tundra. Check our Adult Classes to develop your skills.



Located in the West Wing of the Conservatory



Okamé cherry, *Prunus 'Okamé'* is a small deciduous tree with a rounded canopy. This cold-tolerant early blooming cherry is noted for its abundant rosy-pink flowers, which are mildly fragrant. Introduced in 1947, 'Okamé' received the Royal Horticultural Society Award of Garden Merit. Grow in moist well-drained soil under full sun for best flowering. **Asian Valley, Main Garden Walk**



Paperbush, *Edgeworthia chrysantha*, is heralding spring as it sports clusters of tiny cream and gold trumpets dangling from dark bare branches. When fully open, the blooms fill the air with intoxicating fragrance, alerting winter pollinators to a feasting opportunity. The inner bark was used to make paper in its native China, hence the common name. This shrub will do well in Virginia when provided with some shade and rich soil. **Asian Valley, Flagler Garden, Margaret Streb Conifer Garden.**



'Jetfire' in Flagler Garden

Daffodil, *Narcissus*. Originally from Spain, Portugal and North Africa, daffodils were prized in ancient times. Today, more than 32,000 registered cultivars have been selected and classified into 13 categories based on features of the petals, cup shape and size. See our 270+ varieties throughout the Garden – such as this featured 'Jetfire' in Flagler. On March 23-24 Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden again will host the annual Virginia Daffodil Society Show where the flowers are judged. **Throughout**



Swath of 'Jetfire' in Flagler Garden



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 Virginia 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. **Flagler Garden (Dot's Garden).**



Cornelian cherry, *Cornus mas*. A member of the dogwood family, this small tree produces rounded bright-yellow flower clusters on short stalks. The common name refers to the fruit, which is a bright red, resembling the color of the gemstone carnelian (or cornelian). It is edible, though tart, and can be used to make preserves. The genus from the Latin "horn" refers to the dense strong wood. **Children's Garden (lakeside path).**

