

BRIGHT SPOTS

CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

March 10, 2025

+ Virginia Native Plant

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Come April 1, 2025, until late spring of 2026, we will be closing the Conservatory to complete our expansion project! The process will begin by removing plants from the East and West Wings to make repairs and redo hardscaping. Once repairs and hardscaping are finished, the East Wing will be converted from a tropical climate to a Mediterranean climate. The West Wing will remain a desert wing but will be replanted to resemble deserts of the Southwestern U.S. In addition to changing our existing wings, we will gain two more: a tropical house and a permanent butterfly house. Be sure to come visit the Conservatory and enjoy your favorite plants before April 1!

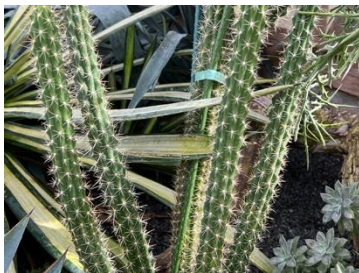


The inflorescence of 'Snow Cream' at the front of the Robins Visitor Center

Paperbush, *Edgeworthia chrysantha* 'Snow Cream' is a most unique deciduous shrub because its elegant dark green leaves are preceded by incredibly fragrant inflorescences of fuzzy white tubes opening to yellow tips. While Asian Valley and Flagler Garden offer other cultivars, 'Snow Cream' showcases very large bouquets at the ends of its many-branched dark stems. Vase-shaped in structure, the plant's moderate size, simple cultural needs (sun & rich, moist soil), and resistance to deer, insects and diseases make it a winner in almost any garden. **Robins Visitor Center - Front**



The multi-branched nature of the shrub filled with blooms before the emergence of foliage



Located in the West wing of the Conservatory

Fragrant prickly apple, *Harrisia fragrans*. Endemic to Florida's coastal hammocks, about ten populations remain, primarily in St. Lucie County. Hurricanes, habitat destruction and invasive plants accelerated its demise. This member of the cactus family has night-blooming white to pink flowers that develop into reddish fruit about 2" wide. Our conservatory is helping restore this endangered (critically imperiled) plant by harvesting the fruit, germinating seeds, and growing plants for conservation efforts.



Flowers on the fragrant prickly apple cactus



S. japonica 'NCSX1' Double Play® Candy Corn® located in the Robins Visitor Center Rear

Spiraea, *Spiraea japonica* 'NCSX1' Double Play® Candy Corn® and *Spiraea thunbergia* 'Ogon'. Double Play Candy Corn is a compact shrub with color bursts! Spring starts with apple red leaves that turn gold in summer with dark purple blooms and orange in the fall. 'Ogon' is upright with willowy branches that bear tiny white flowers before its golden leaves appear in spring. In partial shade, it appears to be chartreuse. Both are deer resistant.



S. thunbergia 'Ogon' (bridal wreath spirea) in Asian Valley



Close-up of the bell-flowered cherry tree along the Main Garden Walk East

Bell-flowered cherry, *Prunus 'Okame'* No need to drive to DC to see cherry blossoms, these lovely trees are bursting open at the Garden. A small, deciduous tree noted for its early blooming, 'Okame' has rosy-pink, mildly fragrant flowers and good cold hardiness. The tree tolerates part shade but flowers best in full sun. Plant as a specimen or in small groups. Royal Horticultural Society Award of Garden Merit winner.



One of 3 'Okame' cherry trees in Asian Valley. As seen along Main Garden Walk East



P. japonica 'Variegata' at the base of Main Garden Walk East

Lily of the valley bush, *Pieris japonica*, is an evergreen shrub native to China & Japan. Its drooping clusters of tiny bell-shaped blossoms emerge with a hint of blush, then open to white, or in some cultivars, shades of pink and deep rose. The flowers are lightly scented, heralding a food source location to pollinators. The plant is slow growing, shade tolerant, & deer resistant. Provide well-drained, acidic soil & it will reward you with an elegant harbinger of spring.



P. japonica 'Katsura' in Flagler Garden near the Pavilion



Now in full bloom and full fragrance

Winter daphne, *Daphne odora*, named after Daphne, a nymph who was transformed into a plant to escape Apollo's unwanted advances. An evergreen shrub with glossy leaves and clusters of showy pink, lavender or white flowers it perfumes the crisp winter air with an irresistible floral scent, blooming from mid to late winter. Stroll to the Woodland Walk to enjoy this early blooming harbinger of spring.



Located next to the bench in Dot's Garden (Flagler Garden)

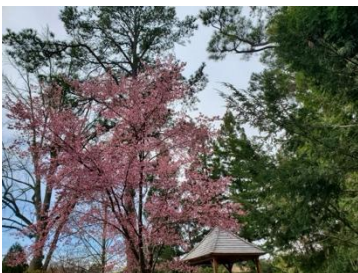


The largest of a few cornelian cherry trees along the Cherry Tree Walk by the Children's Garden

Cornelian cherry dogwood, *Cornus mas*, is unlike dogwood trees around town. This small tree produces tight, rounded, bright yellow flower clusters on short stalks before the foliage emerges. The common name refers to the fruit, as its bright red berry resembles the carnelian gemstone. When sweetened, the tart fruit is used to make preserves. Like all *Cornus* (dogwoods), the genus refers to its dense, strong wood. It is pest, insect & disease resistant - in addition to being low maintenance.



The bright golden yellow blossoms on the tree pre-foliage emergence



One view of the towering Sargent cherry tree

Sargent cherry, *Prunus sargentii 'Columnaris'* is a true four-season tree known for its profuse spring flowers, attractive summer foliage, fall color, and reddish-brown bark. The flowers are followed by dark purple cherries, enjoyed by hungry birds. It is also a larval host plant to the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly. The Sargent cherry tree honors Charles S. Sargent, first director of The Arnold Arboretum, Harvard U.



Another view - Lucy Payne Minor Memorial Garden