

BRIGHT SPOTS

CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

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LEWIS
GINTER
BOTANICAL
GARDEN

+ Virginia Native Plant

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June is shoulder season in Central Virginia. Early bloomers have given their all; spring ephemerals are neatly tucked in, protected from the heat that we know is coming soon. Since 1970, average summer temperatures in Richmond have increased almost three degrees, leading to “feels like” temperatures of 105 to 110°. Urban heat islands amplify the effect and because warmer air holds more moisture, we expect above average rainfall as well. Help your plants manage this stress by planting more natives which may require less water (once established). Group plants with like needs together. Watering early in the AM reduces evaporation and when practical, using drip irrigation is more efficient.



The rattlesnake plants (*Goeppertia insignis*) border the central urn

Goth gardens feature nature’s dark plants by creating a mysterious and enchanting aesthetic! ZZ plant, Raven™ ‘Dowon’ (*Zamioculcas zamiifolia*) towers over rattlesnake plant (*Goeppertia insignis*) as sweet potato vine, Sweet Caroline Raven™ (*Ipomoea batatas*) crawls through the bed. Dwarf banana (*Musa acuminata*) ‘Colla’ peeps in as elephant’s ear (*Colocasia esculents* (L.) Schott) and coleus ‘Dark Star’ (*Plectranthus scutellarioides*) loom large and emerge in the beauty of darkness! Be mystified in the Bragdon Memorial Garden.



Colocasia esculents (L.) Schott is the name of this black elephant’s ear



‘Fairy Tale Pink’ is in Four Seasons and by the Lotus Bridge

Daylilies, *Hemerocallis*, are not actually lilies, but belong to the genus *Hemerocallis*. The name comes from the Greek words *hemera* meaning day and *kallos* meaning beauty - as each flower lasts one day. More than 60,000 cultivars exist with flowers coming in almost every color except blue. Adaptable to a wide variety of climates and temperatures, their thick tuberous roots can store enough nutrition and moisture to get through periods of drought and are also useful in erosion control.



The dramatic ‘Grape Velvet’ is found in Fountain Garden West



The cardoon reaches heights in the Meditation Garden

Cardoon, *Cynara cardunculus*. This perennial architectural plant features deeply lobed silvery leaves and tall stalks topped with a bluish-purple thistle. Although related to the globe artichoke, cardoon’s flower buds are less appetizing. Instead, the stalks - which resemble celery – are a culinary delicacy in the Mediterranean. Brought to America by the French and Spanish, cardoon became a staple of colonial gardens. Research it, and consider adding it to your modern garden.



The emerging flowers

A project of Garden Guide volunteers



'Coronation Gold' covers the corner of Fountain Garden East

+Yarrow, *Achillea* 'Coronation Gold'. This butterfly magnet has flat-topped flower clusters in shades of yellow, orange, red or white, accompanied by soapy-scented feathery foliage that repels deer and rabbits. Native to temperate areas world-wide, yarrow can rescue barren areas because of its tolerance for heat, drought and infertile soils. Named in honor of Achilles, a Greek hero, who used the plant to stop bleeding and heal wounds on battlefields. Dry the flower heads!



'Balvinrose' New Vintage™ graces the Grace Arents Garden



'Little Hottie' hydrangea along the Main Garden Walk – west side

Panicle hydrangea, *Hydrangea paniculata*, 'Bailpanone' Little Hottie® is a compact deciduous shrub growing between 3'-5' tall and wide – a perfect size for residential gardens. Adorned with large blooming heads that emerge green then turn sparkling white before turning pink in the fall, Little Hottie® has earned the name because the blooms don't get heat stressed or turn brown in the extreme heat of Virginia gardens, making it a stunning bloomer summer through fall!



A group of these small hydrangeas



Along the pond at the base of Asian Valley, this beauty has intricate veining on the falls & dark upright petals for pollinators

Japanese iris, *Iris ensata*. A late bloomer, these irises thrive in sun, humidity and wet soil or standing water (springtime only). Then, drier soils are needed, making shallow wide pots - with good drainage and humus-rich soil - an option. Highly prized in Japan, it has been cultivated and hybridized for around 500 years, producing numerous colors and the largest iris blooms. Hybridization expanded after introduction in the west (19th century). Good for water gardens!



Deep purple *Iris ensata* 'Nikko' blooming in Flagler Garden near the pavilion



Stokes' aster 'Honeysong Purple' along Fountain Garden East

Stokes' aster, *Stokesia laevis*. Who was Stokes and why is this complex flower named for him? Scottish botanist & doctor, J. Stokes, worked with many plants to develop medicines; this charmer honors his memory. The plant, native to N.C. and south, blooms in blue/lavender/white and is low maintenance, heat, drought, rabbit & deer resistant. Almost evergreen, this easy plant has everything going for it – including bees and butterflies. Don't resist; take a close look at this stunning flower.



Varied colors of Stokes' aster seen in Flagler & the Children's Gardens and throughout



Located in area RG2, close to the Main Garden Walk

Shrub rose, *Rosa* 'Wekcibako' Home Run®, is a prolific, disease-resistant shrub rose with a dark red flower that blooms all summer. Because it is a "single" rose – one that has only 5 petals on its flower – the blooms are open for pollinating bees to reach nurturing nectar and to pick up the male pollen on its stamens. True of many plants, open-petaled flowers invite easy access for easy propagation.



A close-up of this 5-petaled rose