

BRIGHT SPOTS

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

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**LEWIS
GINTER
BOTANICAL
GARDEN**

+ Virginia Native Plant

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Autumn officially arrived in Richmond September 22 at 8:05pm. Our temperatures have been toasty enough that maybe *we* haven't noticed, but the Garden all around us is certainly aware. Look around! Our beloved Monarch butterflies have already departed; their journey of thousands of miles to their winter home in Mexico has begun and now the hummingbirds are fueling up for their migration. The cicadas are quiet and chipmunks are stuffing their cheeks with seeds and nuts to store. Our shrubs are heavy with berries that will carry birds and small mammals through the winter. Before we know it, crisp mornings and cooler nights will bring the gorgeous palette of gold, amber, and russet.



Found in the Four Seasons Garden, this unusual fruit does not seem appetizing to us – luckily! Its preceding flowers are a late-season pollen source

Balloon plant, *Gomphocarpus physocarpus*.

Native to the plains of SE Africa, it has been introduced world-wide. Ecologically, the small intricate white flowers provide nectar for different danaid butterflies and caterpillars feed on the vegetation (Monarch & African Monarch). The fruit is curious – lime-green balloons covered with hairy bristles – that is sought-after by florists. Avoid touching or ingesting the plant, which is completely unsafe for humans or livestock. In fall, the pods dry to a tan-brown hue and split to release flat dark seeds with silken hairy tufts that are wind dispersed.



In VA, this annual grows rapidly (4'-6') and works as a conversational specimen plant or at the back of garden borders



Grow the dwarf variety 'Emperor' in gardens, containers, or as bonsai for visual interest. Four Seasons Garden

Pomegranate, *Punica granatum*. Originating in a region from Iran to northern India, traders spread it along the Silk Road to Asia and Spanish explorers introduced it to the Americas. Now grown world-wide, bushes and trees have orange-red spring blooms, yellow fall foliage, and crimson-red fruits that may persist on the bare wood all winter long. Fruits may be eaten fresh, made into juice or syrups, or used as a garnish. Rich in fiber, vitamins C and K, and antioxidants.



Grow 'Smith' (Angel Red ®) for its large juicy fruits and soft edible seeds. Chrisman Sunrise Gardens



Best grown in full sun. Prefers moist soil but will tolerate dry and wet soils. Goldenrod is found throughout the Garden.

+ Goldenrod, *Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks', forms a bushy upright clump of electric yellow flowers in the late summer/fall. Goldenrod attracts over 100 types of caterpillars and dozens of specialized bees, considered to be the best perennial for pollinators & winning many awards. Native bees nest in the dead hollow stems, so cut stems to 12"-24" during winter. Don't confuse goldenrod with its look alike ragweed; the flowers are insect pollinated (not causing allergies) unlike wind pollinated ragweed.



'Fireworks' can be seen in the Medicinal Garden and other cultivars are planted elsewhere



Symphyotrichum oblongifolium 'October Skies' in the Meditation Garden, shows a bee and the two pistil colors.

Asters. According to Greek legend, the goddess Astraea was so upset by the lack of stars in the sky that she began to weep, with asters sprouting from where her tears fell upon the ground. In Greek, aster means star. Sun-loving and drought resistant, often coloring the landscape where other blooms have given up for the season. A vital food and habitat source for wildlife. Once pollinated, the yellow pistil will darken - which is a sign for the bees to not waste their time.



Tatarian aster, *Aster tataricus* 'Jindai' in Fountain Garden West, grows 3' to 6' tall on sturdy stems



S. scoparium 'Standing Ovation' is a natural mutation that provides blue, purple, red, maroon colors

+ **Little bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium***, is a native grass now also used ornamentally. Given full sun, the plant will thrive in almost any condition, without pests or diseases, and will give you clumps of blue-green leaves, coppery-red blades in the fall, and the tall stems with flowers and soft seed heads we now see. Native birds, bees, mammals, and beneficial insects use it for shelter and nesting sites. It's a larval host for skipper butterflies. And its root system improves the soil.



Fall seeds are eaten by songbirds. See this one in the new Ann Cummings White Garden



Pollinated by butterflies, hummingbirds, and bees – the nectar must be sweet!

+ **Obedient plant, *Physostegia virginiana* 'Vivid'**, is a late season pollinator magnet. A resilient colonizer, it thrives in moist, barren or disturbed ground where it spreads quickly, some would say aggressively. Once established, obedient plants stabilize soil and reduce erosion; shallow roots make unwanted plants easy to pull out. Flowers on the stalk can be twisted in any direction where they will stay, hence the "obedient" name. A great choice for meadow or native garden.

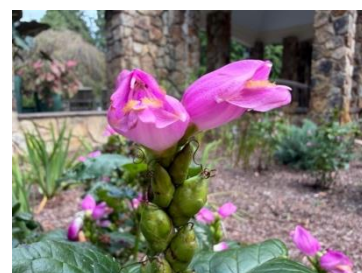


In the mint family, neither deer nor rabbits are attracted to the plant. Found in Asian Valley



Find this group in Flagler Garden behind the pavilion and throughout the Garden

+ **Turtlehead, *Chelone lyonii* 'Hot Lips'**, a native perennial, prefers a moist and partly sunny spot in the garden. The common name refers to the blooms that resemble a turtle's head. In Greek mythology, the nymph Chelone was invited to the wedding of Zeus and Hera, but she preferred to stay home. Miffed by the gods, they flung Chelone and her house into the river and transformed both into a turtle. She then could never leave the river as she was forced to carry her house on her back forever.



Pinch back the stems in the spring for a bushier plant come fall. Blooms attract bees and other pollinators



Anemone x hybrida 'Honorine Jobert', has single, elegant, bright white flowers with yellow stamens. Near café terrace

Windflower, *Anemone hupehensis*. Named from the Greek word *anemos*, meaning "wind", these flowers sway in the breeze at the end of long, wiry but graceful stems. A herbaceous perennial native to the Himalayas, China and Taiwan, it is a member of the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae). While slow to establish, over time it will become a vigorous grower and naturalize to spread in the landscape by fibrous suckering roots to form colonies. Resistant to deer, rabbits and disease. Found throughout the Garden.



Anemone x hybrida 'September Charm' with silvery pink flowers and darker rose shading. It flows along the Garden Walk East Side