BRIGHT SPOTS

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

October 26, 2026 – A biweekly publication (next issue November 9, 2026)

LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDEN

+ Virginia Native Plant

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Fall brings a buzz of activity to the garden as staff and volunteers prepare for next spring's "Million Blooms." The hundreds of plants that bloomed cheerfully all summer are gone & the beds are in transition. As a part of our commitment to greater sustainability, horticulturists were challenged to reduce the number of plants/bulbs by 20% without sacrificing the impact of the spring display. New perennials and grasses in the Central Garden and Main Garden Walk added texture/variety to the composition: mission accomplished. Still, 25,150 bulbs and 7,600 violas, kale and pansies were planted and are ready to burst forth. Makes your fall garden chores look less daunting, yes?



See this year's newly planted 'Raydon's Favorite' in the Sunrise Gardens facing the conservatory

Asters. The Greek 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.



A closeup of the late blooming *Symphyotrichum oblongifolium* 'Raydon's Favorite'



Pink muhly in the morning light and set against the newly planted beets & kale. 4-Seasons G.

+Muhly grass, *Muhlenbergia capillaris*, is a striking, low maintenance perennial grass that grows in graceful, fountain shaped mounds topped in fall with airy seed heads that remain attractive in winter. An asset in the garden, this grass is highly resistant to deer, the seeds feed songbirds and the dense clumps provide shelter for small wildlife. Tolerant of heat, humidity, drought and poor soil, this salt resistant plant has it all!



A row of 'White Cloud' along the Fountain Garden East



On the hill leading toward the Tea House, Asian maples brighten the entire area

Maple, *Acer*. The chlorophyll is gone and the red, yellow & orange leaf colors predominate in the introduced maple trees that abound in the Asian Garden. Walk a bit further and you will see a bold American hybrid maple in the Grace Arents Garden. This tree grows quickly, similar to parent silver maple, and has the spectacular autumn color and stature of its other parent, the red maple. A signature tree for your lawn or park. It is named after the hybridizer, Oliver Freeman.



***Acer* × *freemanii* 'Jeffersred' Autumn Blaze® in Grace Arents Garden**



This lovely camellia is located at the top of Asian Valley. They are blooming throughout the Garden

Camellia, *Camellia sasanqua*, is a lovely evergreen shrub in the tea family. It blooms when many other ornamentals are dormant - a welcome addition to the landscape. The blooms can be single, semi-double or double petaled flowers and come in shades of white, yellow, red & pink. Native to China it prefers morning sun and protection from afternoon sun and wind. The flowers often appear in Chinese art, literature and poetry to represent beauty, purity and faithfulness.



***C. sasanqua* 'Rainbow' has fragrant single flowers, white & edged in pink. Flagler Garden**



During the Civil War, roasted & ground persimmon seeds were used as a coffee substitute

Japanese persimmon, *Diospyros kaki* 'Eureka'. Look up high in the tree to spot persimmons. A late season treasure, this edible fruit ripens to bright orange in late fall, often persisting into winter. Be patient as unripe persimmons are packed with tannins that cause an intense, mouth-puckering astringency. Ripe fruit can be eaten whole, sliced, or made into jams. Fallen fruit is a winter food source for wildlife. The hard wood is prized for artisan kitchen utensils.



When ripe, the skin wrinkles & the inside turns soft, sweet, and jelly-like. Asian Valley



***S. leucophylla* 'Hot Pink' is among the many plants located around West Island**

+Pitcher plant, *Sarracenia*. The dramatic trumpet shaped "pitchers" are NOT the flower of this carnivorous plant, but an insect catching apparatus. Nectar glands on the lips and lid attract insects whose fate is sealed by slippery slopes ending in a pool of digestive enzymes, thus providing the plant with nitrogen, otherwise scarce in the poor soil of the wetlands. Many of our plants are threatened or endangered in the wild; our protected space preserves them from extinction.



See the bee trying to escape? Flies, ants, wasps, beetles, slugs can't resist the colors & nectar



Notice the rich dark green leaves. Berries, each with one seed, form in autumn

Poet's laurel, *Danae racemosa*, is a dream shrub. It slowly grows to a gracefully arching, 4' x 4', evergreen beauty - even in dry shade. Not a disease or pest to be found. It is a floral designer's best friend and the plant thrives in Virginia. It was named after Danae, the mother of Perseus & a wife of Zeus. With such a history, in antiquity the plant was formed into a wreath to award one's accomplishments. Ask a friend for a rooted clump that you can add to your garden. **Flagler**



12-18 months later, a berry *may* produce a seed-leaf. Next year a few leaves. And so it slowly grows



In the Children's Garden, provides shade, nesting areas, and food for birds

Jujube, *Ziziphus jujuba*. Cultivated in China for thousands of years, this 16-40' deciduous tree is now grown around the world. The fruit resembles a small plum, changing from green to deep-red as it ripens. Eaten fresh or dried, the fruit is used as a sweetener, snack or ingredient in cooking. It can survive extreme heat (104°F) & drought. As it is tolerant of salinity and alkalinity, it is used to reclaim marginal land, combat desertification, and prevent erosion. A high profit crop for farms in arid areas.



Fruit has 20-50 times the Vit C of citrus. Rich in carbs yet has a low glycemic index - a health food