

# BRIGHT SPOTS

## CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

May 28, 2024

### + Virginia Native Plant

Bedding changeout is complete. Spaces once filled with tulips have been transformed into tropical extravaganzas. Many plants, liberated from their winter home in the Conservatory, are in pots tucked around the Garden where they should thrive in the heat and humidity of a Richmond summer. Do not miss the tall stately white Bird of Paradise, *Strelitzia nicolai*, guarding the Visitor's Center door from Parking Lot B. The Grace Arents' Garden looks positively Victorian with potted palms strategically positioned along the pathways. Maybe you'd like to drop in "Grace's Victorian Garden Tour" on Friday, May 31 at 1:00!



*H. quercifolia* 'Sike's Dwarf' in Bragdon Memorial Garden

+ **Oakleaf hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia***. In the photos, you can see two flower forms of these natives that are currently blooming on old wood from buds set last year. The plants are as carefree as it gets regarding soil (any type other than wet), light (sun or shade), pruning (none needed) and fertilizer (none other than leaf litter). You will be rewarded by white flowers that fade to pink in summer, maroon leaves in fall and exfoliating bark in winter. Bees and butterflies are among the pollinators seeking the true non-showy flowers deep inside.



*H. quercifolia* 'Brido' Snowflake in the White Garden within Flagler Garden



Closeup of 'Tequila Flame'

+ **Lupine, *Lupinus* 'Tequila Flame' West Country™** The unique fiery appearance of the large spikes is produced by bicolored flowers with lemon-yellow and watermelon-red petals. The genus is native to the U.S. Lupine is a great plant for borders, mass plantings and cutting gardens. Full sun, well-drained soil and regular watering are required. Deadhead to extend the bloom time and prune, after blooms cease, to create mounds of blue-green textured foliage. The spikes attract pollinators, while the plant repels deer and rabbits.



*Lupinus* 'Tequila Flame' West Country™ near the entrance of the Four Seasons Garden



Four Seasons Garden

**Dwarf pomegranate, *Punica granatum* var. *nana* 'Emperor'** is showing both flowers and tiny developing fruit now. This small multi-stemmed deciduous shrub will grow to 2-4' tall in a sunny well-drained location. It can also make a handsome summer container plant to be over-wintered indoors or shaped into an elegant tree-form bonsai. Botanically, the edible fruit is a berry and has many health benefits. This cultivar has received the Royal Horticulture Society Award of Garden Merit.



The trumpet flower is attractive to hummingbirds.



Tubular flower spikes

**Red-hot poker, *Kniphofia* 'Gold Rush.'** Native to South Africa, these tough perennials thrive in full sun but require well-drained soils. Despite the common name, the tubular flowers can be yellow, orange, pink, or cream instead of red. The spikes make great cut-flowers and are pollinator magnets for hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies. Carefully watch the crowns for rot, which is a sign of too much water.



Upper Fountain Garden West



The inflorescence

**Yarrow, *Achillia* 'Coronation Gold'.** Popular with pollinators and beneficial insects, yarrow is native to N. America, Europe, and Asia. The name honors Achilles, the Greek hero, who used the plant medicinally to stop bleeding and heal the wounds of his soldiers. While 'Coronation Gold' is a brilliant yellow, the Garden has many colorful subfamilies. It grows well in dry lean soil, loves humidity, emits a sweet soapy fragrance and resists rabbits and deer.



*Achillia* 'Coronation Gold' in the Fountain Garden East



*Astilbe* 'Ellie' in the White Garden within Flagler Garden

**False goat's-beard or false spirea, *Astilbe*.** While there is one species native to the mountains of Virginia, the ones that we grow originated in Asia. This colorful, shade-loving plant slowly spreads, as shown in the right photo. The foliage resembles fern and, while none of it is tempting to deer or rabbits, bees are attracted. Pretty in the garden as well as in a vase. Our moist spring has brought out the best in this low maintenance plant.



*Astilbe* x *rosea* 'Peach Blossom' in Lower Asian Valley



*Iris ensata* 'Pin Stripe' in Lower Asian Valley

**Iris, *Iris*.** Natives of Asia, these late-blooming iris have spectacular outer petals in shades of purple, red or white. The upright inner petals, often in a contrasting color, attract insects to the reproductive area. Over hundreds of years, the Japanese have hybridized *I. ensata*, producing a great diversity of flower forms, such as 'Pin Stripe' which grows in wet soils. *I. korolkowii*, a native of Afghan mountains, prefers well-drained sandy soils.



*Iris korolkowii* in Lower Asian Valley



Louise Cochrane Rose Garden in Bed RG5

**Rosa, 'BAIPEACE' Love & Peace** is an offspring of a rose developed in the late 1930's in France by Meilland. Anticipating the German occupation, he sent cuttings around the world where they flourished. The rose, named 'Peace', was introduced to the world on VE day, 1945, and has been named Rose of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Love & Peace is a hybrid tea with soft yellow blooms splashed with pink. Resistant to both black spot and mildew.



The blossom