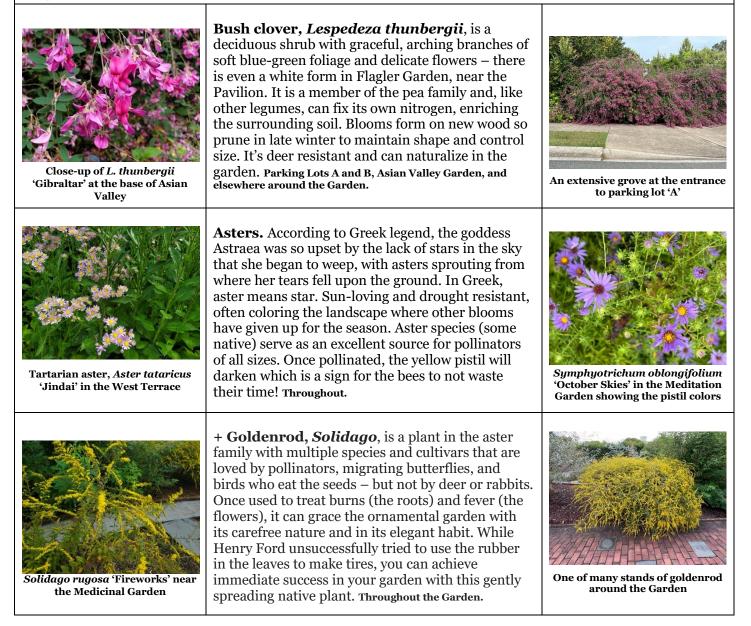
BRIGHT SPOTS CURRENT GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS

September 23, 2024

+ Virginia Native Plant

We often think of spring as the time to plant flowers and vegetables, but fall is also an optimal planting season. The "thousand blooms" of spring here at the Garden are provided by bulbs planted in fall. While the leaves of our deciduous trees are slowly turning from green to shades of yellow, orange, and red the rains are arriving, adding moisture and cooling the soil, providing perfect conditions. If you want to create your own "million blooms" the variety of bulb colors and sizes are almost limitless. Depth of planting depends on the size of the bulb (tulips, 5"-7"; crocus 3"-4"); the rounded end faces down. Sometimes with very small bulbs distinguishing one end from the other is difficult. Rest assured that in most cases the growing tip will find its way out of the soil to deliver spring delight!



LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDEN



In a container by the West Triangle bed in front of the Conservatory



Closeup



Along the Main Garden Walk

Giant Elephant's Ear, *Colocasia gigantea* **'Thailand Giant Strain'**. Even in a pot, these Asian plants can reach 4' to 7' tall, and as wide, with prodigious growth occurring in hot, humid summers. In tropical gardens, downward pointing ear-shaped leaves, with deep veins, are the star. But if you look at the base of these mature plants, you'll see blooms with a whitish leaf-like spate that surrounds the tubular spadix, or reproductive structure. If pollinated, globular berries with several seeds are produced.

Maximilian Sunflower, *Helianthus maximiliani*. Native to the Great Plains, this sunflower is named for Prince Maximilian who explored parts of the American West in the 1830s. The tall slender stems, which can reach 10', produce showy yellow blooms that are pollinated by bees, butterflies and beetles. These aggressive spreaders tolerate deer, drought and poor soils and are a major food source for wildlife as well as sheep and goats. Easily grown from seeds, these sunflowers will self-seed and naturalize.

+Winterberry, *Ilex verticillate* 'Winter Gold' is a slow growing, woody, multi-stemmed shrub that thrives in wet boggy locations, making it an excellent choice for a damp thicket or rain garden. Hollies are dioecious, meaning separate male and female plants. One male can pollinate up to ten female shrubs, resulting in an abundance of golden berries from late summer through the winter. A good source of food for wildlife, *Ilex* is seldom damaged by deer. Asian Valley, Constructed Wetland around the lake.

+ **Obedient plant**, *Physostegia virginiana* **'Vivid'**. The bright pinkish lavender flowers of this cultivar are indeed 'Vivid.' The common name derives from its willingness to briefly retain its position when the flower is bent to one side. These long-lived flowers, which are good for cutting, provide nectar for hummingbirds and butterflies. Plants prefer moist, acidic, well-drained soil, although they will tolerate clay soil. An added benefit - it is deer resistant. At the base of Asian Valley.

Rose, *Rosa* 'Horcogjil' At Last[®]. Striking, deep apricot-orange double flowers fade to a light pink. A sweetly perfumed, long-blooming, disease-resistant rose that is compact, dense and mounding with glossy, disease-resistant leaves. Blooms continuously from late spring through frost. This grows 2.5 to 3' tall and wide. Grow as a specimen or in small groups in borders, cottage gardens, foundations or rose gardens. Also effective as a hedge.Louise Cochran Rose Garden, located in bed RG1.



The emerging flowers



A stand of outside the west wing of the Conservatory



One of several plants next to Sydnor Lake on Constructed Wetland







