



The Trillium

VOLUME 24, ISSUE 1
JANUARY—FEBRUARY, 2015

Piedmont Chapter
North American Rock Garden Society
Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, NC

Woody Winter Wonderland

By Brie Arthur

The winter garden offers a unique opportunity to embrace plant diversity, color, fragrance, texture and habitat. Unlike the seasons of abundant growth, the winter garden provides a moment of quiet elegance where beauty comes in many forms. The few plants that flower during the short, dark days are glorious, boasting a variety of rich colors and sweet fragrances. The silhouettes of deciduous trees and shrubs create a fantastic contrast to the broad leaf evergreens and conifers that provide color and texture. Winter is the season to indulge in woody ornamentals.

Broadleaf evergreens play an important role in enhancing the winter landscape. The foliage helps block harsh winds and provide color and contrast to bare branches and perennial grasses. There are countless options available for gardeners in central North Carolina USDA hardiness zone 7a-b.



***Choisya ternata* 'Sundance'**

Photo from Jackson Nursery online photos

Choisya ternata 'Sundance' provides vibrant color ranging from dark green to bright chartreuse. Growing upright and spreading with a multi-stem habit, 'Sundance' is a vigorous specimen in full sun to part shade. This plant requires SHARP drainage and has no tolerance for wet feet. In spring, powder scented clusters of white flowers adorn the tips of each branch. A ten year size for this plant is likely to be about 4' tall by 6' wide.

Osmanthus heterophyllus is an interesting species for winter interest structure and texture. The floral scented blooms open around Thanksgiving and can last through mid winter in mild climates. They grow well in full sun to part shade with evenly moist soil. The serrated leaves render this to commonly be mistaken as an *Ilex*, hence the name "Holly tea Olive". Additionally, the deer tend to not prefer this species, making it a great choice for areas with heavy populations.

There are many colorful selections that grow well in central North Carolina and provide great screening in suburban settings growing to 8-12' tall and wide. The variety 'Kembu' boasts vivid white and green foliage with a fine texture. 'Purpureus' is named for the dark purple flush of new growth. 'Sasaba' is a vigorous dissected leaf form



***Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Sasaba'**

Photo from Camellia Forest

with extra sharp foliage, which has proven unattractive to deer. The ever popular 'Goshiki' is a lovely 5 colored leaf form with a dense, slow growing habit. This very hardy

election will grow slowly, reaching about 4' X 4' in ten years. The hybrid 'Jim Porter' has a particularly interesting leaf form and adds great texture.



Photo by Brienne Arthur

Trachycarpus fortunei



To add tropical flare to the winter garden plant *Trachycarpus fortunei*. Also known as the “Windmill Palm”, it is considered to be the hardiest trunk forming palm. This palm, from China of the Himalayan region, grows quite easily in full sun to shade conditions with moist, well drained soil. Growth can be dramatically increased by applying Epsom salts in the summer. A different species, *Trachycarpus wagnerianus*, is also known as the “Dwarf Chusan Palm”. This has very stiff leaves and is tolerant of cold, wet winter conditions.

Camellia japonica is well suited for the southeastern climate of central North Carolina. Commonly recognized as a southern heritage plant, the winter blooming camellia is native to Asia. Camellias grow best in high pine shade with moist, acidic soil. Add well draining amendments to heavy clay soil, as they are very sensitive to “wet feet”. Protection from cold winter wind and sustained temperatures below 15F is needed.

Site camellia plants in a location shielded from harsh winter wind and direct sunlight. This will ensure the flower buds do not freeze and the foliage remains dark glossy green. Too much winter exposure results in discoloration of leaves. In colder climates camellias grow best on the NORTH side of a SOUTH facing border. This orientation provides shade seasonally when the sun is low in the sky and bright morning exposure in summer when the sun is high in the sky. 4-6 hours of bright morning summer sun is ideal. Plants in deep shade will not flower as abundantly.

Protect from grazers, including deer by caging or spraying plants with repellent. Prune shortly after blooming season ends, as buds develop in mid-summer on new growth. Fertilize in spring and fall with Holly-Tone, an organic formula for acid loving plants.

There are more than 200 species of camellia and thousands of cultivated selections to choose from. Growth habits and flowers range in color, size and form, providing many opportunities to utilize a collection of camellias in the garden. With new and exciting varieties being introduced every year the joy camellias bring to the winter garden is endless.



Photo by Brienne Arthur



Photo by Brienne Arthur

***Pinus thunbergii* ‘Thunderhead’**

blue foliage that is dense and showy. Grown in full sun with well drained soil, it is a very low maintenance plant with a big impact.

My favorite, under utilized conifer is *Thuja koriensis*. Despite being rare in the trade, it is very easy to grow in sun to part shade. The shiny silver backside makes this one of the showiest conifers and a great cut for holiday décor. The habit is upright and open, with a wide spreading habit of 12”T X 10”W in ten years.



Photo by Brienne Arthur

Thuja koriensis

Deciduous flowering shrubs and trees are a special treat on a mid-winter day. Cold season bloomers tend to have bright flowers and sweet fragrances to attract pollinators. Often the aroma will fill the air, leaving you sniffing your way through the garden to find the source.

Edgeworthia chrysantha is a fabulous choice for winter interest. In mid January the outer flowers begin to open, releasing a distinguished perfume that makes you stop and take a second breathe. Over the next 4 weeks, and especially on warm days, more tubular yellow flowers open, eventually forming a perfect ball.



Photo from JC Raulston Arboretum

The Chinese favored this plant for its silky foliage, having used “paperbush” leaves (*P. papyrifera*) for printing their highest denominations of money in the 15th century. Growing native in the banks of stream beds *edgeworthia* thrive in moist, but well drained soil, and can suffer from boggy conditions. Specimens grown in full sun tend to grow more densely, with short internodes and more flowers. However, this is an excellent choice for the shade garden as well, as plants grow in an open form highlighting the interesting tri-branching habit.

There are several cultivars available in the trade, with one distinguishing characteristic: growth rate. ‘Snowcream’, introduced by Tony Avent of Plant Delights Nursery, is a large, vigorous grower. 10 year old plants can grow up to 15’T x 12’W. ‘Gold Rush’ is proving to have a slightly slower growth rate, reaching about 8’T x 8’W in ten years. Even smaller is this selection offered through Hawksridge Nursery. The habit is much denser and slow growing reaching only 4’T x 4’W in ten years.

Fragrant Winter Hazel or *Corylopsis* is incredible late winter flowering shrub perfect for a Carolina woodland garden. The yellow flowers dangle gracefully and attract pollinators by the masses. Preferring morning exposure with shade in the late days of the hot southern summers, provide adequate moisture through dry periods to ensure healthy growth.

Corylopsis pauciflora is a medium sized plant, reaching 10’ X 8’ in ten years. The flowers are smallest but brightest on this species, making it one of my favorites. *Corylopsis sinensis* is the largest species that we grow. The flowers are long, and dangle like hops. A smaller growing species is *Corylopsis glabra* var *gotana*. The cultivar ‘March Jewel’ has a lovely low, wide-spreading growth habit. The pale yellow flowers are abundant and suspend from the stems in very unique and elegant way.

Commonly called “Flowering Apricots” *Prunus mume* is an Asian native with a vivid history. In central North Carolina these are the earliest of the fruiting trees to bloom; often they begin to flower in early December and continue into March. Traditionally used in Japan for their fruit set which can be pickled or fermented into delicious liqueur, many people grow this plant just for its winter blooms. Branches can be easily forced for indoor arrangements through winter. All the varieties are fragrant, however the darkest flowering forms have spicy scent more reminiscent of cinnamon where as the pale flowers are of a lighter, more floral essence.

All varieties can set fruit, depending on winter temperatures. If the tree is in full flower and temperatures drop below freezing it is likely that no fruit will develop. For best fruit set select late blooming forms, such as ‘Pink Panther’.

Winter is a time to celebrate the value of woody ornamental specimens in the garden. From flowers to fruits, form to texture the opportunities are endless in a Winter Woody Wonderland. ❧



Photo by Brienne Arthur

Corylopsis pauciflora



Plant Profile by Tom Harville

Botanical name: *Hexastylis minor*

Family: Aristolochiaceae

Category: acaulescent herb

Primary uses: shade to light sun

Dimensions: 6" X 10"

Culture: good drainage, rich soil, Ph 5 - 6

Bloom time: spring

Color: burgundy with white spots

General attributes: foliage and flowers provide year-round interest.

Common names are heart leaf or wild ginger that come from the shape of the leaves and the pungent "gingerish" aroma and taste. It is said that native Indians cooked with the leaves and roots. There are some that will argue the genera is *Asarum* but the name does not influence its beauty. There are at least 10 species of *Hexastylis* in North Carolina, mostly found in the piedmont and the mountains, some needing very acid conditions. I singled out *H. minor* because I have had the most luck transplanting and growing it and it has the most beautiful flowers of the NC Hex's. Its leaves are also the most mottled and perhaps are like fingerprints, none alike. It will grow in deep shade but my most vigorous plants get mottled sunlight. I have never done it but I'm told that a very light application of fertilizer helps. It will droop in dry weather. Oh, you have to be a bit risqué to enjoy the flowers – lifting the leaves to see the hidden pleasures. ☞



Asarum

Photo by Tom Harville



Asarum minor

Photo by Tom Harville

Plant Profile by Marian Stephenson

Botanical name: *Arum italicum*

Family: Araceae

Category: tuberous perennial

Primary uses: winter woodland display

Dimensions: 1" tall

Culture: good drainage, humus-rich soil in part sun to part shade

Bloom time: early summer pale greenish-whitish spathes followed by bright red-orange berried spikes, variegated green and white leaves appear in late fall or early winter—lasting until mid-late spring

General attributes: foliage and flowers provide near year-round interest

Common name is Lords and Ladies. All parts of arum may cause severe discomfort if ingested and for some individuals, contact with the foliage may cause an allergic reaction. However, I have not experienced this and am happy to say that deer do not find it attractive at all. Arum is a beautiful addition to the woodland garden and any sites that receive partial sun and partial shade. It is reported to develop larger leaves in a partially shaded site, but I have it growing in a south facing raised bed quite happily and haven't noticed any diminution of leaf size. Birds must like the bright berries, as I find volunteer little arum leaves growing all around my shady beds. A very nice bonus! This is a must-have plant for its elegant winter foliage display. The infinite variation of variegation will win your hearts. *Arum* 'Marmoratum' is most readily available, but newer forms are worth looking for as well. Tony Avent, Plant Delights Nursery, had several stunning selections. ☞

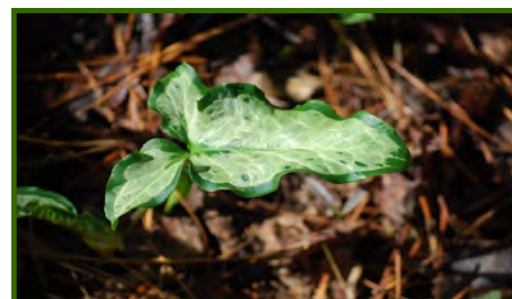


Arum italicum

Photo from Plant Delights

Bobby Ward shares more on *Arum italicum*:

Arum italicum 'Pam Harper' is a particularly nice form of lords-and-ladies, one of the common names for the arum. It originated in Pam Harper's garden in Seaford, Virginia. Ellen Hornig, who at the time was operating Seneca Hills Perennials in Oswego, New York, acquired an off shoot of Pam's form and asked Pam if she could sell it under the selection name 'Pam Harper' and Pam agreed. The photo is taken in my garden on Christmas Day 2014.



Arum italicum 'Pam Harper'

Photo by Bobby Ward

Croatan Carnivores

By Tim Alderton, Research Technician

In the several years that I've lived in North Carolina, I have spent only a little time exploring the varied natural areas found throughout the state but the last few years, I have ventured into one of these areas, the Croatan National Forest in Carteret County. While visiting relatives in the area, I wanted to see some of the most unearthly of plants—plants that eat rather than are eaten.

Late May and June brings on the flowers of the most famous carnivorous plant, *Dionaea muscipula*, the Venus flytrap. I ventured along Pringle Road, north of Cedar Key, where I read that populations of the federally protected plants still prospered



Photo by Tim Alderton

Dionaea muscipula



Photo by Tim Alderton

Dionaea muscipula fall

detailed locations previously found and noted with mileage marks and descriptions of what one would find at each. Only a few hundred yards beyond my own May discovery, we stopped to see another location offering a home to *Dionaea muscipula*.

Walking a few hundred feet off the road through a thin scattering of *Pinus palustris* and passing tufts of *Liatris*, as well as a few plants formerly known as *Aster* and young shoots of *Arundinaria gigantea*, we came upon an area where low depressions or



Photo by Tim Alderton

Drosera capillaris

in the most northeasterly part of their range in the relative wilderness of the longleaf pine savanna. Controlled fires lit periodically and the occasional blaze from a lightning strike provided the open habitat needed by *Dionaea muscipula* and other carnivorous plants growing in the seasonally wet depressions in the expanse of pine savanna. Driving along Pringle Road, stopping periodically when a spot of color from wildflowers or blackened brush from recent burns caught my eye, I managed to locate one of the populations of the hungry plants.

In a recently burnt area, remnants of brush resprouting leaves revealed the identity of some of the overbearing neighbors of the little carnivores. Young leaves of *Vaccinium*, *Lyonia lucida*, and *Clethra alnifolia* emerged from the bases of charred twigs, preparing to retake the open ground once covered by their vegetation. *Dionaea muscipula*, on the other hand, took advantage of this open canopy to flower and set seed while the good times lasted. Small clusters of ¾", white, five-petal blossoms stood atop 8"-12"

scapes, rocketing from 3"-4" rosettes of fresh green, miniature bear traps growing among the charcoaled stems and venturing into the nearby *Aristida stricta* (wire grass). The grassy foliage of *Stenanthium densum* also took advantage of the new-found sunlight to erect its own tall raceme of white, six-tepal stars with protruding stamens tipped in burnt ochre pollen. Other neighbors in this location included *Sphagnum*; a wiry, pastel blue colored *Lobelia nuttallii*; fluorescent orange-flowered *Polygala lutea*; the prostrate marching stems of *Vaccinium crassifolium*; and the fragrant foliage of *Myrica cerifera* var. *pumila*.

Another trip into the Croatan in search of predatory plants came in early November.

John Henderson, an amateur nature photographer from Cedar Key, promised to show me at least six of the resident carnivorous plants species growing only a few miles from his home. With his topographical map of the southeastern Croatan in hand, we jumped into his Jeep and drove up Pringle Road. His map



Photo by Tim Alderton

Stenanthium densum

ruts allowed for moister conditions than that of the surrounding open pine savanna. With close inspection, John began pointing out nickel- and quarter-sized rosettes. Tiny, pale green, tennis racket-shaped leaves covered in red hairs tipped in orbs of sticky glue sometimes held minuscule arthropods trapped in the adhesive jewels: *Drosera capillaris*, the first of three sundews species found that day. Upon even closer inspection, a second species, *Drosera brevifolia*, began to appear. Very large rosettes growing only to the size of a nickel and sticky, red, ping-pong paddle-shaped leaves

nearly lacking petioles helped to distinguish these patient hunters. Pale yellow mats of *Sphagnum* in places surrounded the tiny, red rosettes of *Drosera*, highlighting both plants in this unique habitat. Sometimes only inches away, hiding at the base of clumps of grass, with green rosettes of leaves tipped in blood-red jaws, *Dionaea muscipula* waited for the unsuspecting insect prey to land and trigger the leaves to close.



Photo by Tim Alderton

Agalinis aphylla

nourishment, but are not totally dependent on them as they themselves can still photosynthesize. This location also contained the creeping *Vaccinium crassifolium*, a late flowering *Polygala lutea*, and resprouting *Gordonia lasianthus*.

After spending thirty or forty minutes at that location, John and I got back into the Jeep and traveled only about two miles to our next stop on Millis Road. Climbing up a low bank into another open pine glade brought into view a depression about 300' long by 40' wide, spotted with traps of water-filled *Sarracenia*. Two species grew in the perpetually wet soil, the most apparent of these *Sarracenia flava*. Hundreds of now browning, 18" tall, trumpet-like, tubular leaves stood among the grasses and other bog plants. A few still showed the summer's chartreuse tubes with varying degrees of burgundy red veins radiating up the leaves and onto the hood, still waiting for unsuspecting insects to venture into their water trap. Scattered around, remnants of parachute-like seed heads were only memories of the bizarre, yellow, spring blossoms. The second species, *Sarracenia purpurea*, formed



Photo by Tim Alderton

Sarracenia purpurea

several patches near its taller cousin. The dense clusters of 6" tall, green-veined, red pitchers appeared fresh as spring, despite the fall appearance of *Sarracenia flava*. One loner flowered, holding a red spaceship-shaped blossom on top of a 10" scape.

Looking beyond the very apparent *Sarracenia*, John again pointed out the tiny rosettes of *Drosera*. Two species grew in the small open patches of the boggy soil. *Drosera capillaris*, with the tennis racket leaves, grew here as it did in the previous location on Pringle Road, but it was joined by the third species of the day, *Drosera intermedia*. The leaves of *D. intermedia* grew longer, thinner petioles and appeared more like a badminton racket than the tennis rackets of *D. capillaris*. Also, the rosettes grew to an enormous quarter to fifty-cent piece size.



Photo by Tim Alderton

Drosera intermedia

Growing alongside *Sarracenia* and *Drosera*, the versatile *Coreopsis gladiata* sent up a few thin, 10" stems topped in 1½", golden yellow daisies with a dark brown center. In the muck of the bog, pipe cleaner stems of a *Lycopodiella* maneuvered their way around the clumps of grasses and *Sarracenia*. In the middle of an almost entirely herbaceous community of this bog, a solitary clump of bushy, glossy black-fruited *Ilex glabra* were the only other woody to venture in to the wet expanse. On the bank of the depression, pale blue inflorescences of *Ionactis linariifolius* loosely covered the open, needle-like foliage of the 8" tall plants. On the relative high ground, a lone *Gentiana autumnalis* held an unblemished blossom of a rich blue funnel with a white throat brushed with mashed pea green and flecked with speckles. As John and I prepared to leave, I looked down and noticed the late flowers of a spiral orchid. The leafless, 8" tall stalk held nine white blossoms on a twisted stem. We would later find out that this

rescences of *Ionactis linariifolius* loosely covered the open, needle-like foliage of the 8" tall plants. On the relative high ground, a lone *Gentiana autumnalis* held an unblemished blossom of a rich blue funnel with a white throat brushed with mashed pea green and flecked with speckles. As John and I prepared to leave, I looked down and noticed the late flowers of a spiral orchid. The leafless, 8" tall stalk held nine white blossoms on a twisted stem. We would later find out that this

orchid, *Spiranthes longilabris*, which was identified with the help of several people in the native plant community, happened to be federally endangered and had not been recorded in Carteret County.

I found remarkable the number of familiar garden plants growing within sight of the carnivorous plants that I had gone to see. *Myrica cerifera*, *Clethra alnifolia*, and *Ilex glabra* connected the plants in our gardens to the wild predatory plants' world, strange neighbors that one would never expect to see cohabitating within our own gardens. Others, like the recovering *Gordonia lasianthus*, challenge the gardener to grow them in conditions like their inhospitable home in the intermittently wet/dry pine savanna, where they flourish despite recurrent fires. Within several yards of these two locations, other familiar landscape plants grew not in the lush ways we are accustomed to in our own yard, but as wild, hardy cousins, able to take the stressful conditions found in the pine savanna. The ubiquitous *Ilex vomitoria*, *Pinus taeda*, and multiple species of *Quercus* were growing as scrubby shrubs to 40' trees. *Pinus palustris*, though less common in landscapes, provides the main canopy of the surroundings where some trees, I have read, are over one hundred years old, though their smaller size makes them look much younger due to the extreme conditions of the savanna.

Take time this spring and venture into the wild, whether in the woods behind your home or in the distant lands traveled on your next vacation, and look to see what remarkable plants you can find. Maybe you'll see familiar plants, but hopefully you'll see some remarkable treasures like the carnivores of North Carolina. 🐍



Photo by Tim Alderton

Spiranthes longilabris

Conjuring Tricks

by Laurence Avery

Looking out at our woods, you would notice a distant roofline through the trees, but I seldom see it. Ages ago I wheeled in flagstones, and Rachel, on her knees, fit and leveled them into walks adopted quickly, to our smiling surprise, by foxes cruising the woods at dusk. Three spurs went out to birdbaths, copper basins steadied with rocks on the ground, and we found before long we'd fashioned a place where even turtles could drink. All along we made a game of finding plants that love the shade – losing often. But we hit a winner with *arum italicum*, contrarian of the plant world that sprouts in the fall, sports emerald leaves all winter over snow or brown leaf-mold, then dies in the spring, leaving pencil-stalks with berries that ripen bright orange. Catbirds think we grow the arum for them, and repay us promptly, dropping seeds wherever they perch. Now, stray arum in the woods, plants and paths and baths, conjure a world for me that you won't see. 🐍

Editor's Note: If you enjoy this poem, perhaps you would enjoy others from his new book of poems Mountain Gravity. (Chapel Hill, NC: New Atlantic Media, 2013). It is available at Barnes and Noble and online.

Piedmont Chapter Speakers Winter and Spring 2015

February 14, 2015

Tim Alderton

“Wildflowers of the Croatan National Forest”

JC Raulston Arboretum

NC State University

Box 7522

Raleigh, NC 27695-7522

March 14

Brian Jackson

“Horticultural Adventures in Global Gardens
and Glens”

NC State University

Horticultural Science

130 Kilgore Hall

Raleigh, NC 27695-7609

April 18, 2015

Andrew Bunting

“Plant Hunting in Northern Vietnam”

The Scott Arboretum

408 Vassar Ave.

Swarthmore, PA 19081

May Event—date and place to be determine

NARGS Piedmont Chapter Meeting

JC Raulston Arboretum
Ruby McSwain Education Building

January 17, 2015

Brienne Gluvna Arthur of
"Growing a Greener World?" TV program
"Woody Winter Wonderland"

7624 Troy Stone Dr.
Fuquay Varina, NC 27526

The Trillium, Newsletter of the Piedmont Chapter
The North American Rock Garden Society
1422 Lake Pine Drive, Cary, NC 27511

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OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

Sept. Plant Sale Manager: Kirtley Cox

Refreshments: Gwen and Maurice Farrier

Food Goodies to Share

If your last name begins with the letter below,
please consider bringing something to share.

Jan. Q-T

March X—Z

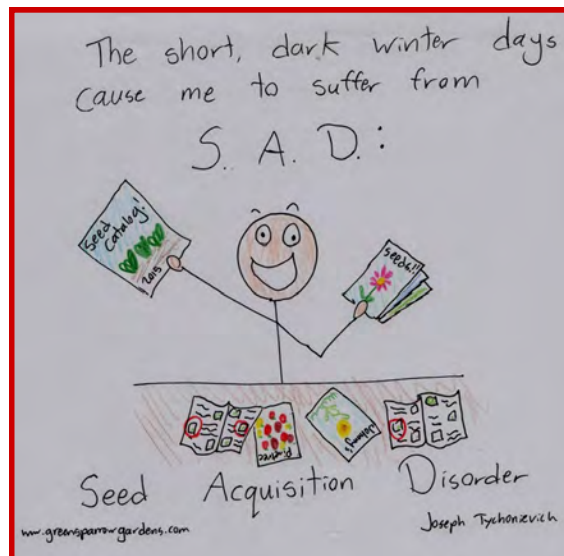
Feb. U—W

April Every one

Seed Exchange Fulfillment Program

Come be part of the fun—
pulling seed packets to fulfill the orders from NARGS members around the world. Help others get over their seasonal problem as we send seeds on their way.

Start-up is January 5 and will continue until all orders are dispatched—late February or early March. The event is in the home of Bobby Wilder - see address on panel at left.



I'm hoping that every one can put in at least one shift or perhaps a full day. The morning shift will be from 9:00 until noon, and the afternoon shift will be from 1:00 until 4:00. If you stay the full day, we will entice you with a pizza lunch. (We hope to work Monday through Saturday, so no excuse for those of you that still hold down jobs.) If any one would like to commit to a shift or full day right now, that would be greatly appreciated. Charlie Kidder, Chair