

What's Blooming?

May 2008

As you exit, please recycle this guide at our front door for the next visitor.

***Epimedium* (barrenwort)**

This diminutive relative of the barberry has a long history of garden and herbal use. The common name of barrenwort implies its herbal usage as an aphrodisiac, as well as its ability to thrive in environs that many other plants will fail in. Their ability to withstand deep shade and survive competition with tree roots makes them an essential addition to any shade garden. Epimediums' springtime blooms occur in a wide range of colors including white, yellow, rose, crimson and violet. Currently three varieties are in bloom in the Garden.

Epimedium grandiflorum 'Orion', with purple blooms, and *Epimedium grandiflorum* 'Okudus White' are nestled under the Osmanthus in the Courtyard of Tranquility. **(Map location A and B)**. While the yellow blooming *Epimedium pinnatum* subsp. *Colchicum* can be found along the west wall under the large Japanese white pine. **(Map location U)**

***Saruma henryi* (upright wild ginger)**

This rare shade loving perennial, introduced in the 1980's, is taking the gardening world by storm. Its heart shaped leaves emerge a fuzzy sliver-green in the spring. The yellow cup-like flowers bloom from spring through summer. A superb woodland garden plant that can stand alone or be effective in mass planting. **(Map location C)**

***Jasminum mesnyi* (primrose jasmine)** The jasmine is often seen in Chinese gardens. An easy and vigorous evergreen that produces a rash of golden yellow double to semi-double flowers in late winter. According to legendary botanist E.H. Wilson (1906), *J. mesnyi* was commonly seen in hedgerows in southern Yunnan province. Experts speculate that it has been in cultivation for over 200 years in China as evidenced by botanical drawings and landscape paintings dating back to the 18th century. See specimens at the Knowing the Fish Pavilion and the Boat Shaped Pavilion cascading into the lake. **(Map location D)**

***Loropetalum chinense* (Chinese Fringe Flower)** This evergreen shrub is a witch hazel family member. Flowers are lurid pink and characterized by a chaotic arrangement of narrow, twisted petals. *L. chinense* is affectionately referred to as the 'people's choice' plant by our garden staff because it garners the largest number of inquiries. Specimens with either green or burgundy-colored foliage can be found throughout the garden. The cultivar 'Hine's Purpleleaf' is in full bloom at the east end of the covered bridge. **(Map location E)** A white flowering form, *L. chinense* 'Snow dance', is equally compelling growing beneath a red-flowering camellia in front of the Teahouse. **(Map location T)**

Magnolia 'Yellow Bird' China is the country with the greatest number of native magnolia species. So highly regarded were they in ancient times that only the emperor was entitled to grow them. Worthy subjects would occasionally be rewarded with a cutting. While the Garden has several species of magnolia, most have already completed their flowering cycle for the year, save for *Magnolia 'Yellow Bird'* at the east end of the covered bridge in the southeast section of the garden. Its buttery yellow, cup-shaped blooms are an outstanding season finale for our magnolia collections. **(Map location F)**

Deutzia gracilis 'Nikko'

A small, gracefully-arching, deciduous shrub that produces an abundance of small snow white in flowers in May and June. Its small rich green leaves turn a reddish-purple in the fall before dropping. This versatile flowering shrub received the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Gold Medal in 1989. **(Map location G)**

Holboellia coriacea

This self fertile vine is currently blooming in abundance in the Phoenix Rest. The small flowers radiate a mild scent. Mature plants will produce sweet 2 inch long, sausage shaped fruit from the female flowers that are usually borne lower on the plant. The raw fruit are edible though insipid. **(Map location H)**

Camellia reticulata 'Dr. Clifford Parks'

This sumptuous show stopper has large, peony-form, rose-red flowers with prominent gold stamens. *C. reticulata* has been cultivated since ancient times in southern China, where it is lauded for its longevity. Mature specimens claimed to be many hundreds of years old can be found in temple gardens near the cities of Kunming and Dali in southwest China. **(Map location I)**

***Kerria japonica 'Pleniflora'* (ditang flower)**

Native to China, this reliable spring and fall bloomer is as steady as the day is long with brilliant golden yellow flowers running the length of arching, bright green, cane-like branches. The double blooms of *K. j.* 'Pleniflora' are dense and round. The Chinese have cultivated this popular garden plant longer than anyone can remember. It is often found in older gardens in the Portland area as well. View a veritable cornucopia of blooms at the east end of the covered bridge. **(Map location I)**

Malus (flowering crabapple) Before strolling out across the Zig Zag Bridge to the Moon-locking Pavilion, pass through an arrangement of plants divided into three separate beds. The deep pink flowers of *Malus 'Prairie Fire'* located in the southeastern leg of this triangle of beds are captivating. **(Map location J)** Note the disorderly array of intertwined branches; this is a characteristic in woody plants that the Chinese value. A white flowering cultivar, 'Sugartyme', presents a stark color contrast along the west wall opposite the Boat-shaped Pavilion. **(MAP location S)**

***Paeonia suffruticosa* (Tree Peony)**

The peony has been cultivated from ancient times in China and reigns as its national floral symbol. Early uses were purely medicinal yet when the peony came into vogue as a garden plant, the pursuit of it became nothing short of a national obsession. The development of hundreds of large, brilliantly colored cultivars continues to hold sway in gardens today. Look for them through the month of April throughout the Garden and in particular in the courtyard preceding the Hall of Permeating Fragrance. Here for starters, you'll find 'Slow Pea Green' which resembles an exotic head of cabbage with tight, compact buds which unfurl with light citrus green petals flushed in pink. On the west wall of this courtyard, find a rather large, simple looking, white-flowering form named 'Phoenix White.' This very vigorous bloomer is widely cultivated in China for its bark which has curative properties.

(Map location K)

Rhododendron veitchianum

Beloved for its large, frilly, fragrant white flowers, this unusual rhodie makes a great container plant where it is too tender for outdoor planting. Appearing in March or April, white flowers are flushed pink on the outside with a bold orange-yellow flare. Bark is reddish-brown and peeling. *R. veitchianum* can reach from six to twelve feet and is cold hardy to 20°F. **(Map location L)**

Agapetes serpens

This rhododendron family member bears tubular, orange-red flowers marked with evenly spaced rows of deep red chevrons. Flowers are about an inch in length and hang gracefully in clusters on long arching stems. *A. serpens* is a native plant in the foothills of the Himalayas where it grows as an epiphyte in forests. This simply means that it doesn't root in soil but grows on other plants for mechanical support. It manufactures its own food and obtains moisture from the air or moisture-laden pockets of the 'host' plant. Our specimen abides in a large white ceramic pot in the Scholar's Study and is a 'must-see!' **(Map location M)**

***Iris confusa* (Bamboo Iris)**

Look for a small patch of shy flowers with fans of broad, sword-like foliage borne on bamboo-like stems before entering the Garden. They are located beneath a tall stand of black bamboo to the left of the Garden entrance. Blooms are small and orchid-like with white petals bearing blue markings and a pale yellow crest. Each stem holds a multitude of flowers. **(Map location N)**

Rhododendron spinuliferum

This rhododendron's crayon red-orange flowers are little more than an inch in length and distinctly tube-shaped. As such, this species has earned the nickname 'Firecracker Flower' among the Chinese. Leaves are delicate and narrow, complimenting a shrub that is characteristically very open and spare. *R. spinuliferum* has an exceptionally long flowering season. This rhododendron resides quietly in dappled shade on the north side of Half a Window Clustered in Green. **(Map location O)**

***Podophyllum pleianthum* (mayapple)** Beneath the knarled juniper on the west side of the Boat-shaped Pavilion is the bold and fanciful foliage of *P. pleianthum*. Six to nine-sided leaves resemble shields thrust boldly into the air. Loose tassels of deep red flowers dangle beneath. This barberry family member is native to the upland forests of southeast China. Visitors from the east coast often recognize this plant because it is similar to the species of mayapple that is native to that region of the United States. **(Map location P)**

Primula kisoana f. alba

A far cry from the common, garden-variety primula found in supermarkets, this species has unusually pretty, downy, rounded leaves that are coarsely toothed and grow to 6 inches in diameter. Stems bear flower heads with up to 8 snow white, 5-petaled flowers with tiny greenish eyes. *P. kisoana f. alba* grows along the Garden's west wall across the path from the Painted Boat in Misty Rain. **(Map location R)**

Magnolia 'Ann'

The grand dame amongst our magnolia collection, the gnarled branches and stooped posture of this particular specimen evokes a feeling of reverence. However, its flowers, reddish purple at the base and paling towards the tips of the petals, are lush and plentiful. *Magnolia 'Ann'* was a product of the U.S. National Arboretum magnolia breeding program which has made a number of especially significant contributions. One among a group of hybrids called 'Eight Little Girls', 'Ann' and her 'sisters' were developed from species known for their hardiness, late season blooms, and prolific flowering. Find it at the Garden's west wall, just south of the Painted Boat in Misty Rain. **(Map location V)**

Pulmonaria saccharata 'Mrs. Moon'

This evergreen perennial is a respectable old cultivar of a species originating in central and southern Europe. It has somewhat hairy green leaves sprinkled with silvery white spots and develops pink buds as early as March that mature to small, funnel-shaped, bluish purple flowers produced in abundance. Flowering continues throughout April and May, when old leaves are replaced by fresh, new foliage. **(Map location W)**

Upcoming Horticultural Events

Horticultural Tours – Tuesdays at 2:00 PM.

Take a stroll through the garden with Glin or Bill, our gardeners, and hear more about the Garden's world-class botanical collection.

Annual Peony Sale- May 10th-18th

Come celebrate Mother's Day and the re-birth of spring in the Garden with our annual Peony celebration. We will have both tree and herbaceous peonies for sale as well as cut-stems. And don't miss our annual Peony Display in the Four Sided Hall. Prize-winning cut stems courtesy of the NW Peony Society will be on display including semi, double, and single forms.

For more details, visit www.portlandchinesegarden.org
or call 503-228-8131.

