



Hydrangea quercifolia 'Snow Queen'

Photo: Jason Veil

25 YEARS OF FEATURED PLANTS

John Frett



IN EACH OF THE PAST 25 YEARS UDBG's plant sale has done an in depth exploration of a featured woody plant group. The exploration has included popular species and cultivars as well as unusual and rare variations. For this silver anniversary sale, we are presenting an opportunity to reflect on a quarter century of great plant groups. Reflecting on plants in groups makes it easier to compare and contrast their merits, gaining a greater understanding of how they vary and how to choose the best for your own garden. This year's offerings focus on examples from each plant group that have proven to be the best for our region along with recent introductions that are demonstrating equal merit. Following are overviews of each group and the individual write-ups appear in the Plant Description sections.

1994 🌿 Oak and Hickory (*Quercus*, *Carya*)

This huge group of plants offers numerous native trees, typically of large stature and significant longevity. Surprisingly fast growing, trees often will reach 30 feet in about 15 years. Some species offer scarlet, red, bronze or golden yellow fall color and all offer nuts for wildlife.

1995 🌿 Evergreen Holly (*Ilex*)

The quintessential broadleaf evergreen in landscapes, *Ilex* offers tremendous variety depending on species selected. Leaf texture varies from coarse to fine, leaf color from yellow green to dark blue green, and size from small to large. A dioecious genus, male pollinators are required for fruit production on female plants. Fruits are abundant and typically red but yellow-fruited cultivars are available.

1996 🌿 Magnolia (*Magnolia* sp.)

Japanese and star magnolias dominate the landscape but the possibilities go far beyond these two species. Different species and cultivars vary in flowering time, color and size; leaf texture and color; plant form and size, fragrance and so much more.

1997 🌿 Hornbeam (*Carpinus*)

Our native hornbeam is a common member of the woodland understory easily recognizable by the smooth, rippled grey trunk. The surprise to many is that there are more than 30 species throughout the temperate regions of the world. Many are similar in the bark characteristic but differ in the structure of the fruit and the fall color of the foliage. The genus offers much as a small tree in the home landscape.

1998 🌿 Viburnum (*Viburnum*)

This magnificent group of shrubs offers multiseasonal interest in over 150 species. The typically white (some pink) flowers begin as early as February and continue into the summer; they may have a lovely fragrance or be somewhat malodorous. Fruit is typically abundant—some begin red and mature to black, while others remain red throughout winter. Fall foliage is usually lovely variation on red theme mixed with other colors. Fruit frequently is an important food source for birds.

1999 🌿 St. John's Wort (*Hypericum*)

Many *Hypericum* are herbaceous but the sale has focused on the woody species. All provide cheery yellow summer flowers for an extended period. Plants are typically 3 feet or less and vary from upright to prostrate groundcovers. They flourish in sun and tolerate dry soils. Some are most noted for the bright red fruit in the late summer and fall.

2000 🌿 Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*)

Oakleaf hydrangeas produce white summer flowers that may fade to pink before turning brown in the late autumn. Burgundy foliage light up the fall landscape then drop to reveal the exfoliating, golden brown bark. The quest for a truly dwarf cultivar continues with the introduction of 'Munchkin' and 'Ruby Slippers,' not available when we first featured this plant.

2001 🌿 Yellow-flowered Magnolia (*Magnolia* hybrids)

All yellow-flowered magnolias derive their color from our native *Magnolia acuminata*. The first cultivar *M.* 'Elizabeth' was patented in 1977 and opened the floodgates to numerous



Carpinus caroliniana
Photo: Rick Darke

Viburnum nudum
'Winterthur'
Photo: Melinda Zoehrer



cultivars. Some flower early, others later like the parent; a few with fragrance, others lack it completely. With all of the cultivars available, the large, deep-rich yellow flower with fragrance still eludes breeders.



Vaccinium corymbosum 'Bluecrop'
Photo: Rick Darke

2002 🌿 Abelia (*Abelia*)

It is difficult to find a more consistent performer than *Abelia*. A compact habit and adaptability to sun or shade make for an adaptable shrub. Fragrant white summer flowers attract numerous pollinators. Leaves turn reddish in the fall. Several colored foliage selections are available.



Magnolia 'Katie-O'
Photo: Dick Figlar



Magnolia 'Elizabeth'
Photo: Danielle Quigley

2003 🌿 Blueberry and its relatives (*Vaccinium*)

The genus is also home to close relatives like huckleberry, lingonberry, and cranberries. White, urn-shaped flowers turn into edible berries. Most have a short stature, although some blueberries will grow to 10 feet or more. Primarily blue fruit (though some red) and red fall foliage make this an excellent landscape plant.



Styrax americana

Photo: Rick Darke

2004 🌿 Snowbell (*Styrax*)

A seemingly small genus until you look deeper as Matt Lobdell, a former UDBG curatorial graduate student, discovered when he uncovered over 100 species worldwide. Japanese snowbell is most common and is undergoing an explosion of cultivars varying in form, flower, and foliage color. The variegated and purple foliage cultivars were not available when we first offered these plants.

2005 🌿 Spirea (*Spiraea*)

Spireas are very popular due to their small stature, colorful foliage, spring or summer flowers, and near impossibility to kill. Flowers are either white or pink and appear in either spring or summer, depending on the species, with summer flowering plants re-flowering sporadically. Fall foliage is variable but may be clear yellow or a purplish red.

2006 🌿 Stewartia (*Stewartia*)

Think of stewartias as a camellia with orange-red fall color and you can begin to appreciate the beauty of this genus. Most



are large shrubs and several offer stunning multi-hued bark. White flowers in summer rival camellias. Plant prefers light shade and are excellent for high visibility areas where you can appreciate their beauty 365 days a year.



(top) *Spiraea tomentosa*

Photo: R.W. Smith

(bottom) *Stewartia pseudocamellia*

Photo: Emily Slingerland



Syringa laciniata on the High Line NYC

Photo: Rick Darke

2007 🌿 Lilac (*Syringa*)

Lilacs may be old fashioned but they never lose their appeal. The extraordinary fragrance of the spring flowers is alluring whether it is on the plant or as a cut flower in a vase. Flowers are typically lilac colored but they come in purple, white, and pink. The new selections offer good resistance to mildew.

2008 🌿 Redbud (*Cercis*)

The explosion of eastern redbud cultivars offer variation in flower color (white, hot pink, pale pink), foliage (burgundy, chartreuse, variegated), and form (compact, weeping). An excellent small tree for residential landscapes.



Cercis canadensis 'The Rising Sun'™

Photo: Jason Veil

2009 🌿 Plants for Wildlife

Plants for wildlife were an emphasis this year but are always a conscious part of the selection offered each year. Edible fruit for mammals and birds, flowers for pollinators and other foragers, and foliage that feeds both adult and larval stage insects are always an intentional part of the mix.

Ilex verticillata 'Winter Gold'

Photo: Rick Darke





Hamamelis 'Sunburst'

Photo: Melinda Zoehrer



Corylopsis spicata 'Aurea'

Photo: Rebecca Pineo



Camellia 'April Blush'

Photo: Melinda Zoehrer

2010 🌿 Witchhazel (*Hamamelis*)

Striking flower display in the late winter and early spring is the signature of most witchhazel. Yellow, golden orange, and "red" flowers are often fragrant and always garner attention. Fall foliage is often a bright yellow, orange or red. Be mindful of suckers on grafted plants.

2011 🌿 Winterhazel (*Corylopsis*)

The name indicates the close relation to witchhazels and, like these, flowers are produced in late winter and early spring. Fragrance is a spicy-sweet fragrance. Bring in flower branches to force blooming.

2012 🌿 Camellia (*Camellia*)

Camellias are known and loved by most all gardeners but few appreciate the diversity of species available. All are grown for the magnificent white, pink, red, or variegated flowers that appear in early spring or late fall depending on species. Most species add to their appeal with evergreen foliage. We have selected cultivars suited to zone 6 and 7 to provide the necessary winter hardiness.

2013 🌿 Flowering Quince (*Chaenomeles*)

A long time standard in the garden, quince have experienced a revival with the introduction of the "Storm" series of cultivars. White, pink, red, orange and bicolored flowers precede the foliage in spring. Dense branching makes these a good selection for screening. Green fruit are useful as part of a fall potpourri but are not common on newer selections.

2014 🌿 Hydrangea (*Hydrangea*)

The diversity of the genera extends well beyond the previously featured oak leaf hydrangea. The blue/pink color of big leafed hydrangea are classic. The more diminutive stature and light shade tolerance of smooth hydrangea make it the perfect plant to tuck into many corners in the garden. A host of other choices abound.

2015 🌿 Sweetshrub (*Calycanthus*)

The merging of the Asian genus with our native sweetshrub expands the diversity of possibilities. Flowers vary from white to yellow, and maroon red. Some are very fragrant, other not so much. Several hybrids offer larger flowers. A shrub that offers beauty for sun or shade.



Calycanthus 'Edith Wilder'

Photo: Rick Darke

2016 🌿 Buckeye (*Aesculus*)

A large genus with plants ranging from large trees to compact shrubs. Most are noted for their white, yellow, pink, and red flowers and easily recognized by their palmately compound leaves and iconic buckeye fruit. Hybrids offer smaller tree stature useful in the smaller landscape and pink spring flowers.

Chaenomeles 'Iwai Nishiki'

Photo: Melinda Zoehrer



Hydrangea serrata 'Miyama Yae Murasaki'

Photo: Melinda Zoehrer



Aesculus parviflora

Photo: Rick Darke

