



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"Ninety-seven Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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Orchids

Orchids are found from the Arctic to the tropics, and in Safeways, Targets and Costcos. Orchids in bloom are given to moms on Mother's Days and birthdays. The vanilla orchid, a native of Mexico, is painstakingly cultivated, mainly in Madagascar, and their pods are harvested for (currently) the most expensive seasoning in the world. *Phalaenopsis* flowers last and last and after they fade, what do you do? If you're lucky you'll hit upon the exact location in your house that *Phalaenopsis* loves and you'll give it the exactly perfect amount of moisture. Otherwise you have **Carol Allen** to help you learn how to identify what care is best. Carol has a Master's degree from the University of Maryland focusing on orchid viruses. For many years she held monthly diagnostic/orchid repotting clinics at Behnke's, so who better to help us learn to coddle our orchids? Carol is also a club favorite, having talked to us not too long ago about how to prune shrubs. Be sure to mark your calendars for her presentation on **Wednesday November 18, 10:30am** at the club's ZOOM meeting and keep your eye open for your email invitation.

Jane Malish



Caroline Turner shares this photo of a stunning arrangement with white Japanese Anemone, trailing Vinca, and white Annabelle Hydrangea. See more of her arrangements on page 3.

Environmental Concerns

Barbara Collier

Divining Vines

Heed warnings about the spreading capabilities of vines. Apparently their growth is spurred by higher levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere, and vine infestations are an increasing problem. This is especially so in the case of nonnative invasives like Japanese honeysuckle and creeping euonymus, but even our native vines can get overenthusiastic. Both Virginia creeper and native autumn clematis, *Clematis virginiana*, creep over long distances and can seed themselves freely. Depending on your garden, if you grow these vines, you may need to cut them back and keep on top of seedlings to prevent them from running rampant.

This has not been the case with my so far demure pipevine, *Aristolochia macrophylla*. It is supposed to like sun or part shade, but I suspect it won't be happy until its head has grown above the canopy of a nearby Japanese maple. After a couple of years of slow growth, its single leafy stalk looks like it is just about ready to emerge into the sun next year. Will it then grow vigorously, as advertised? Similarly, my *Lonicera sempervirens*, the trumpet honeysuckle, also said to be a vigorous grower, has only managed to grow a few feet. I watch and wait to see if these sleeping, creeping vines decide to leap next year.

In contrast, I present our native passionflower vine, *Passiflora incarnata*, commonly known as the maypop. It has spectacular fragrant blooms, edible fruits, and attractive leaves that can be dried and used as a tea, supposedly with medicinal properties. Like the other two vines above, it is said to be a vigorous grower. What's not to like?

Ah. All the descriptions say that the roots also spread aggressively. This turns out to be an understatement.

I planted one at the base of a small dead tree, thinking that it would grow over the tree nicely. Well, you know how it is. At first you are delighted when the vine finally emerges in late spring and starts to grow rather tentatively up its support. As it manages to establish itself, you observe that it seems to have more than one stalk, but that's ok, you're still in the cheering-on stage; another stalk seems quite welcome. It's only later that you realize that the twining tendrils have far overshot the height of the support you arranged and have started seizing all the plants nearby (the vines can grow 20 or 30 feet in a season). Then you observe that other passionflower tendrils are emerging several feet away from the original spot and are clambering all over everything. (Did I mention that the small dead tree was in my meadow garden?) There are now passionflower vines snaking everywhere in my meadow. Undisciplined is not the word.

This is the point at which one realizes that this is a vine that should really be either in a container, or in the middle of a lawn that is regularly mowed.

To increase the general merriment at my expense, I should mention that I actually acquired two passionflower specimens, because I understood that different individuals were required for good fruiting. So of course I find passionflower vines popping out all over the lawn near the bed where I planted the second one. Interestingly enough, the vines appear to be browsed by deer, and since they also get mowed, the problem over there is more confined.



Passionflower vines galore; note wooden prop and rope holding up trellis.

This year I started pulling out all the vines near the dead tree (which finally fell over) and allowed some vines emerging 15 feet away to grow over a wire arbor (oh yes, that is no distance at all for those prodigious roots). Not learning from my mistakes, I allowed more than one of the vines to grow on the arbor. The rather overwhelming result is shown in the picture.

Despite their obstreperousness, I'm not yet ready to terminate the passionflower vines with extreme prejudice. The flowers are beautiful, and perhaps because I have two genetically different specimens, I get lots of fruit: I have harvested maybe 45 fruits from the vines, and there are many more.

I think I will dig up some of the truly awe-inspiring roots of this plant and see if I can get it to grow in a container. Then we'll see.

Photos above, and at top of page 3, by Barbara Collier



Maypops on the vine (left) and harvested (right).

Photos from Our Members:



Additional lovely arrangements by Caroline Turner: Blue Wood Aster, red Persicaria, yellow Goldenrod, fading Endless Summer hydrangea (above), and oldish Annabelle Hydrangeas (right), which sometimes turn green!



Lou Olin shared this photo of *Salvia* 'Lip Stick' from her garden.

HORTICULTURAL NOTES

Autumn Fires Everywhere

Carole Ottesen

This year's warm temperatures have allowed us to stay outside in comfort longer and enjoy this especially fine season of blazing fall color. It may be imagination, but doesn't it seem that the shrubs and trees are outdoing themselves this year, producing fierier shades of gold and orange and red?

Mountain Stewartia, *Stewartia ovata*

For example, the foliage of mountain Stewartia, that began as a golden yellow color, is now turning from bright orange to shades of red. A relative of the Asian camellias, the mountain Stewartia hails from the heart of Appalachia. This large shrub or bushy tree growing to only about 15 feet tall and wide is sometimes called 'mountain camellia' or 'summer dogwood.' Thriving at the edges of forest or in the light shade of suburban landscapes in moist, rich soil, mountain Stewartia blooms in mid-summer, producing white flowers that dot its zigzagging stems. Pretty as the blooms are, it is fall that this small native really shines.

Asian Spicebush, *Lindera glauca* var. *salicifolia*

The deer have taken a terrible toll on the native spicebush, *Lindera benzoin*. So far anyway, they haven't bothered its Asian cousin, *Lindera glauca* var. *salicifolia*. This showy shrub reaches about ten feet tall. Its pleasant green, willow-like leaves can be heard whispering in summer winds. October brings small, black fruits as it turns the leaves a fiery orange. As fall advances, the leaves become dry and tan, rattling in the winter winds.

Asian spicebush grows quickly in full to part sun. Its multi-trunk habit makes it a good screening or specimen plant.

Photos by Carole Ottesen

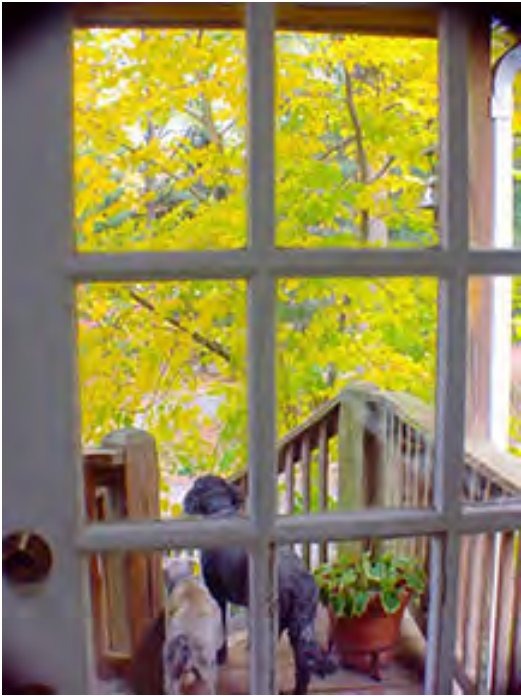


Lindera glauca

Yellowwood, *Cladrastis kentuckea*

As its binomial suggests, yellowwood is a native of the southeastern United States that grows happily anywhere in Zones 5 through 8. Named for the yellow color of its heartwood, Yellowwood is not a subject for every garden. It gets big—up to 50 feet tall. Nor is this tree one that can be counted on to flower bountifully every year. Early June flowering is heavy only every second or third year. However, in that second or third June, when abundant white flowers dangle on panicles that are over a foot long, the spectacular show is well worth waiting for. There are also pink-flowering forms of this tree, including 'Perkins Pink.'

If its flowers are a bit erratic, its fall color is reliable. Yellowwood fires up faithfully come October—a bright, sunny yellow that ratifies its name.



Yellowwood, *Cladrastis kentuckea*

Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum*

Some twenty years ago—possibly more—a friend, who shall not be named, decided she was leaving her home, garden, and husband, and began transplanting some of her prized plants into my garden with the intention of replanting them wherever she eventually landed. One of these was a Japanese maple she especially prized. Though I have searched my plant diaries, I can find no mention of its cultivar name. As there are over a thousand cultivars, I won't even try to take a stab at it.

In the end, my friend didn't leave her home, garden, and husband. Nor did she come back to reclaim her plants. Nor, in the emotional upheaval of that time, does she remember the name of this particular tree. As a result, there is a spectacular Japanese maple shading a small patio in my garden. It stands about twenty feet tall and nearly as wide. Right now, it has begun the transformation from golden to red-orange foliage. I treasure it for the gentle shade it provides all summer long as well as for its brilliant fall color. Best of all, if you wait long enough, the fallen leaves seem to curl up and blow away before you get a chance to rake them.

Coral bark maple, *Acer Sango-Kaku*

This small tree reaches 20 feet by about 15 feet wide. It is stunning when brilliant yellow leaves contrast with the bright coral of the stems. Coral bark maple branches are great to cut for winter arrangements. It should be noted that the older the stems, the less vibrant the color.

If there is one plant to carry us from the glories of fall into and over the winter, it is the coral bark maple. After its leaves fall, the bright red stems shine as brightly as flares to guide us all the way to spring

Coral bark maple, *Acer Sango-Kaku*



Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum*