

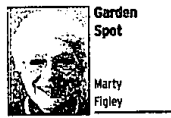
Beautiful, versatile shrubs are popular in home gardens

Beautiful and versatile shrubs are becoming more popular in our gardens. I'll call this column "The ABCs of Shrubs" because I'll tell you about them, their beauty and care. Here are some new ones on the market.

Many of us probably know the following shrub as elderberry. The botanical name is *Sambucus* and one would be a great addition to many gardens, especially in a natural setting. Elderberry is better known for its folk uses.

Recent introductions now have a colorful array of foliage such as yellow, copper, white and even black.

Black Beauty (*S. nigra* "Gerda") is the newest with



Garden Spot
Marty Flieley

dark black foliage that doesn't fade in green in summer, but actually gets darker. Lemon-scented, rich pink flowers appear in late June to early July that are a great contrast to the foliage.

Grow Black Beauty in almost all soils as a shrub or as a bold perennial; cutting it back in the fall results in a neat plant. Maturity: 8 to 12 feet; zone 4. A new *Potentilla fruticosa*,

or Bush Cinquefoil, is "Sommerflore." It is a long-blooming cultivar with bright yellow blooms from mid-summer until frost.

A light shearing increases the quantity of flowers that look good in the summer heat when others tend to look spent. This plant does best in fertile, moisture-retentive, but well-drained, soil that's neutral to slightly alkaline, but will adapt to some acidity.

There are several cultivars with white, apricot and pink blooms. Use this beauty as a low hedge, in a perennial border or the front of a shrub border, or along foundations. In late winter remove one-third of old growth and reshape. Maturity: 3 feet; zone 3.

Another winner is *Deszaua*, a genus that encompasses more than 60 species of mostly deciduous shrubs. Grow these for their airy sprays of white or pink spring flowers and often delicate, arching habit. Some dealers develop exfoliating bark with age.

The new *kalmiflora*, *D. purpurensis* x *D. parviflora*, is considered one of the best because of the arching and showy blooms.

The flowers are white/light pink on the inside and deep pink on the outside.

Grow in sun or part shade in fertile soil with protection from strong winds. It needs

minimal pruning. Maturity: 4 to 6 feet; zone 5.

HYDRANGEAS

Hydrangeas are an old-fashioned favorite, with flowers that range from white to supple "cups," and a species with burgundy fall foliage and furrowed bark.

There are more than two dozen species of evergreen and deciduous shrubs and climbers. The flowers of the shrubs are great for drying to add winter beauty indoors.

These plants like fertile, moisture-retentive soil, full sun to part shade. The species vary in their tolerance to sun, wind, salt and drought, and in their pruning requirements, so growers need to know what to do with the ones they have chosen.

There are only a few cultivars of *H. arborescens*. A new one, "White Dome," *H. arborescens* "Dardom," is proving to be even more spectacular than the popular "Annabelle" now on the market.

The plant is excellent in all respects, with strong flower stems and big, robust leaves. "White Dome" is perfect for the back of the perennial border or for use as a specimen. The large blooms are excellent for cutting and make exotic floral displays. Maturity: 4 to 6 feet; zone 4. All of these plants are native to North America.

CARE

All plants need nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and traces of about a dozen other elements such as calcium, magnesium and sulfur. It doesn't matter whether the source is organic or inorganic.

Organic amendments work more slowly than inorganic fertilizers, so need to be applied before a plant is in stress. Inorganic fertilizers work more quickly.

The soil needs to be tested before planting to be sure it contains the elements the plants need.

Nitrogen helps green up leaves and produces rapid vegetative growth, so should be applied early in the season. Phosphorus stimulates root growth and should be added to the hole when you plant your shrubs. Potassium promotes flowering and fruiting and can be added in early spring or early fall.

Never fertilize in late fall, which can stimulate tender new growth that can be damaged by frost.

Water plants well before and after fertilizing.

Marty Flieley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

Bordine presents Spring Garden Expo

BY MARTY FLIELEY CORRESPONDENT

You won't want to miss the Bordine Nursery Spring Garden Expo which will take place 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, April 12 and 13, at the Rochester Hills and Clarkston locations.

Come and enjoy breathtaking floral displays, including several landscape designs to give visitors ideas of what can be done in their own gardens.

Also, representatives from Mike's Tree Surgeons will present the latest news about the Emerald Ash Borer that is destroying those trees.

Pruning demonstrations and other garden activities will be ongoing throughout the days. Haley Stone, Croom's Tree Service and Scotts will also be present.

This is a good chance to see the newest and finest in the garden industry.

Experts at 50 booths at each location will be available to answer questions.

A number of nonprofit organizations will be represented, such as Cranbrook Gardens, Meadow Brook Hall, Global ReLeaf, Miss Dig, Proven Winners/Four Star Greenhouse, Michigan State Master Gardeners, and Leader Dogs for the Blind.

There will be something for everyone, so bring the children along. They can visit the petting farm and/or paint a clay pot for a souvenir.

You can enter to win more than \$500 worth of Bordine Nursery gift certificates and other fine prizes, just for attending.

Refreshments will be sold.

A special attraction will be the only Detroit area book signing by P. Allen Smith, April 13 at both locations.

This national garden personality from CBS's *The Weekend Early Show*, and *Woman's Day* magazine, will be at the Rochester Hills store 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and at the Clarkston location 2-4 p.m.

His book, *P. Allen Smith's Garden* (Clarkson Potter Publishing, \$29.95), will be available for purchase and he will personally sign your copy.

The book, with photographs by Jane Colclasure, is a down-to-earth approach to gardening. It is divided into three sections.

Bordine Nursery is located at 1835 S. Rochester Road in Rochester and on Dixie Highway just north of I-75 in Clarkston.

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