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*Randy Best,  
Behnke's Perennial  
Specialist, stars on  
cable television's  
Home and Garden  
Network Kitchen  
Design Show.  
Watch for him  
Wednesday, September  
16th, at 4:30 pm.*

## Spring Flowering Bulbs

— by Albert W. Gardiner, Senior Bulb Consultant

During 60 years of gardening and advising other gardeners, I've come to believe that no garden is complete without a mass planting of spring-flowering bulbs which, along with pansies, herald the beautiful spring season. The flower bulbs for this spectacle must be planted in the fall. If you plan carefully and plant your bulbs this fall, you can have blooms from March through June.

It all begins in early March with low-growing snowdrops, windflowers (*Anemone blanda*), species crocus, and miniature narcissus and tulips which bloom in many colors. Early April blooms include fosteriana and single early tulips, which grow from 12 to 18 inches high. These flowers, along with trumpet daffodils and hyacinths, provide a brilliant display of color and fragrance.

The show continues into late April with Darwin hybrid and peony-type tulips. These tulips grow about 22 inches tall, and, along with the rock garden-type narcissus, create quite a display in your garden.

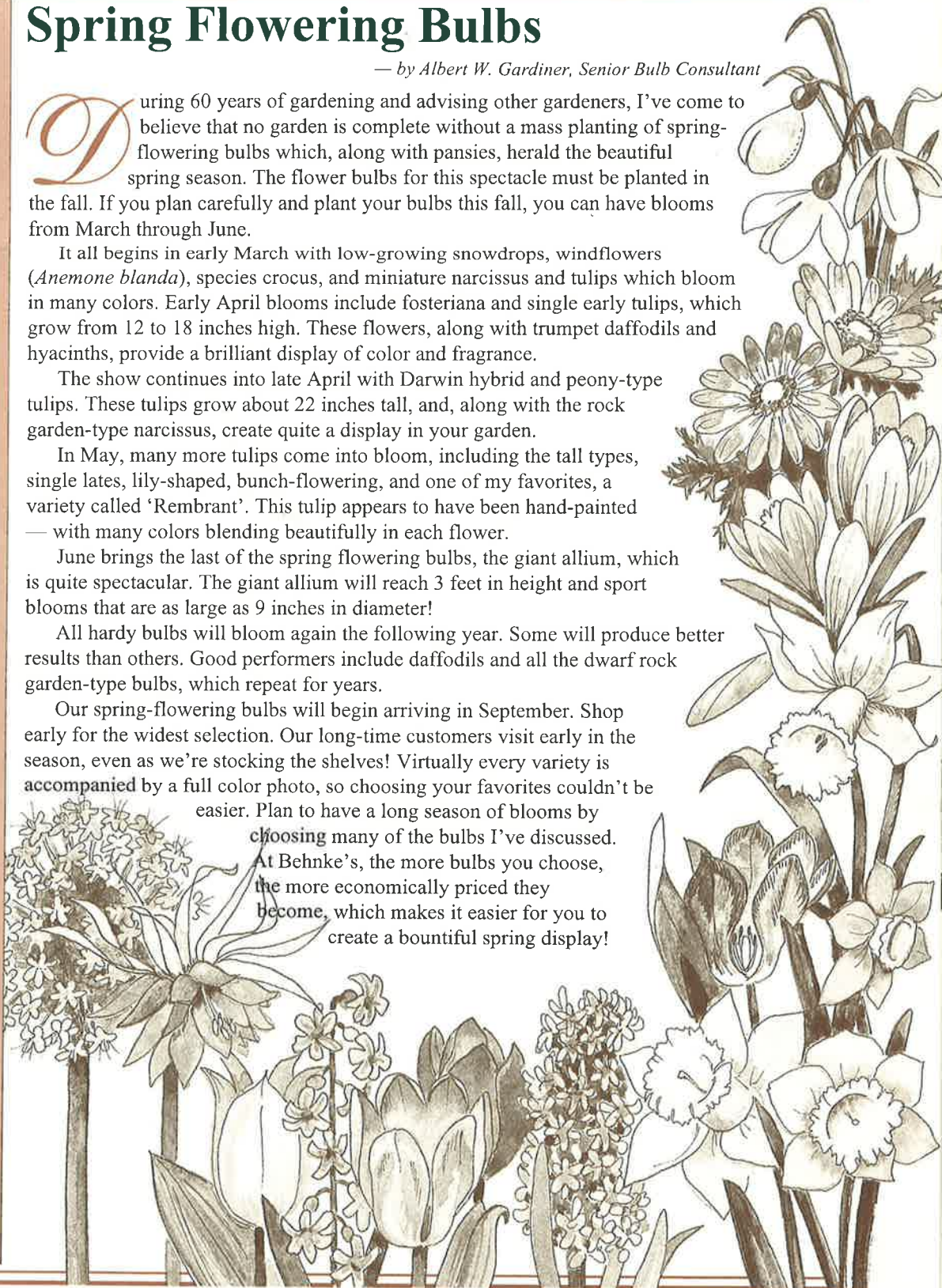
In May, many more tulips come into bloom, including the tall types, single lates, lily-shaped, bunch-flowering, and one of my favorites, a variety called 'Rembrandt'. This tulip appears to have been hand-painted — with many colors blending beautifully in each flower.

June brings the last of the spring flowering bulbs, the giant allium, which is quite spectacular. The giant allium will reach 3 feet in height and sport blooms that are as large as 9 inches in diameter!

All hardy bulbs will bloom again the following year. Some will produce better results than others. Good performers include daffodils and all the dwarf rock garden-type bulbs, which repeat for years.

Our spring-flowering bulbs will begin arriving in September. Shop early for the widest selection. Our long-time customers visit early in the season, even as we're stocking the shelves! Virtually every variety is accompanied by a full color photo, so choosing your favorites couldn't be easier. Plan to have a long season of blooms by

choosing many of the bulbs I've discussed. At Behnke's, the more bulbs you choose, the more economically priced they become, which makes it easier for you to create a bountiful spring display!





# A Life of Adventure in Horticulture

— by Nicholas DelleDonne, Largo Woody Plants

**“W**e were in a small wooden fishing boat out on the Yellow Sea, heading for one of the islands off the west coast of Korea, when suddenly, the engine conked out and we found ourselves adrift. I was scared for my life...” Skip March describes one of many expeditions, principally to Japan and Korea, in a life-long career of collecting elite garden plants for the National Arboretum in Washington, D. C.

As Chief Horticulturist for the National Arboretum, Skip played a major role in the development of the wonderful gardens, including the Gotelli Dwarf Conifers, the National Herb Garden, the Friendship Garden of low-maintenance shrubs, perennials and grasses, the several spectacular bonsai collections, and the National Grove of State Trees. His collecting expeditions produced a number of commercially successful introductions to the United States. Now retired after a notable career, Skip advises customers each spring and fall at Behnke's, where we are proud to carry the following Skip March introductions:

***Ajania pacifica* (formerly *Chrysanthemum pacificum*)** — a low-growing, compact perennial with silver-edged leaves. Skip spotted the attractive leaves growing as a companion plant in a bonsai nursery outside Tokyo in 1982. Although its gold blooms appear just before the first frost in late October, the soft gray-green leaves, faintly silver-edged and silver-backed, make an attractive mound of textured foliage from spring to late autumn. Featured in the *Journal of the Royal Horticulture Society* and on the cover of *American Nurseryman*, the plant caused a sensation in the nursery industry.

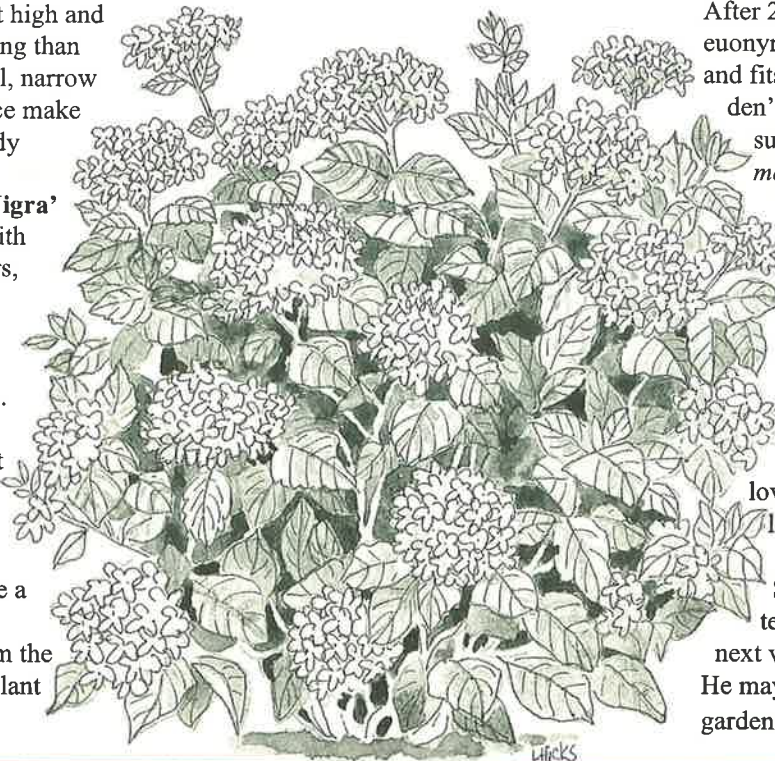
***Deutzia gracilis* ‘Nikko’** — an outstanding low-growing flowering shrub. Its gently arching branches are covered with brilliant white blossoms in April and May. Fine-textured, light green leaves turn deep burgundy in fall. ‘Nikko’ is well suited for small spaces, as a ground cover, for containers or cascading over a low wall. (See it spilling beautifully over the wall at the entrance to the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum at the National Arboretum.) It won the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society's Gold Medal in 1989.

***Euonymus japonicus* ‘Green Spire’** — a dense, narrow evergreen which can grow over 10 feet high and 2 feet wide, with small, brilliant green leaves. Collected from a garden on one of Japan's Oki Islands in 1978, it is suitable as a hedge or accent plant in small gardens.

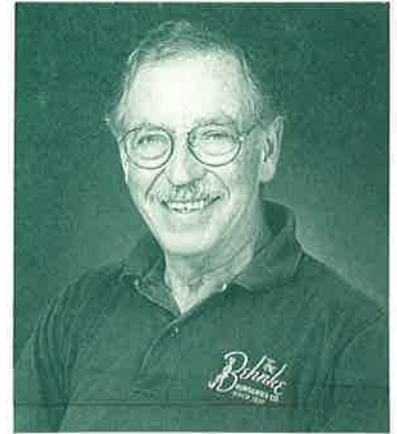
***Ilex crenata* ‘Sky Pencil’** — another dense, narrow-growing evergreen. This one is a Japanese holly with small glossy green leaves. It too will grow to about 10 feet high and 2 feet wide, but is slower growing than *Euonymus* ‘Green Spire’. Its tall, narrow growth habit and shade tolerance make this holly an ideal plant for shady areas in smaller gardens.

***Hydrangea macrophylla* ‘Nigra’** — a black stemmed hydrangea with ball-shaped blooms. The flowers, which can be blue or pink depending on soil acidity, are enhanced by dark green leaves. This hydrangea thrives in shade.

***Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Morning Light’** — an upright grass which forms a mound to five feet tall. It is notable for its narrow gray-green leaf blades with white margins which create a silvery glow. This is an old Japanese selection obtained from the garden of Japanese variegated plant specialist Dr. Masato Yokoi. ☺



## Meet: “Skip” March



Sylvester (“Skip”) grew up on a truck farm on Long Island, with chickens, cows, horses and a lot of plants. In college he studied floriculture, but his interest matured into trees and shrubs. Upon graduation he began a distinguished 40-year career at The U.S. National Arboretum (see article at left).

Today, he and his wife Marliese live in a charming 175-year-old townhouse in Old Town Alexandria, where a brick-walled garden boasts an astonishing array of ground covers, flowers, shrubs and even trees. After 20 years, his ‘Green Spire’ euonymus is 12 feet tall, 2 feet wide and fits in a niche against the garden's south wall. Among the treasures in the garden is *Hepatica maxima*, an evergreen species with large, lobed leaves and pink flowers. It is endemic to Ullung Island off the northeast coast of Korea. Despite the range and variety of plants, the garden is orderly, with a garden pool, garden furniture, and potted plants — many of them shade-loving. The bustle of city life is left at the gate of this retreat.

It is a privilege to have Skip March on the Behnke team. Look for him on your next visit to the Beltsville nursery. He may be able to help you fill your garden needs. ☺



## New Plants for the Seasoned Garden

—by Helmut Jaehnigen, Woody Plants Specialist

As a plant buyer for Behnke Nurseries, one of my most important tasks is to seek out promising plant introductions. Every year hundreds of new varieties hit the market. I must be careful to investigate a candidate before deciding to grow it and give it a Behnke label.

This fall Behnke Nurseries will be offering a brand new hybrid English boxwood. *Buxus* 'Green Ice' is super hardy and holds its deep green color all winter. The new growth in spring is blue-green, adding another fresh touch to your landscape. Its habit is dense and globular, and it thrives in full sun to part shade. And, there is a nice little story connected with its origin.

As it was told to me, many years ago a Catholic priest in Virginia was widely known as a collector of boxwoods. Over the years he amassed quite a collection. When he had to move from Virginia to another parish in Chicago, he took with him a number of his favorite boxwood plants. However, they were unaccustomed to the harsh midwest winters and all of them died — except one! This one stalwart boxwood flourished, remained a deep glossy-green all winter and had a beautiful, blue-green flush of growth in the spring. It grew to about three feet in ten years, and held a beautiful shape without any pruning.

The priest talked to his gardening friends about his prize boxwood, and a large plant hybridizing company, Conard-Pyle, became interested in the variety and wanted to patent it. It was just at this time that the priest passed away, taking his knowledge of the heritage of this particular boxwood with him. Conard-Pyle took cuttings of the boxwood and tested them over a variety of conditions. The result is *Buxus* 'Green Ice', which may very well be the boxwood of the future. Its supreme cold-hardiness, deep green, glossy foliage and compact growth habit make it a boxwood that has it all.

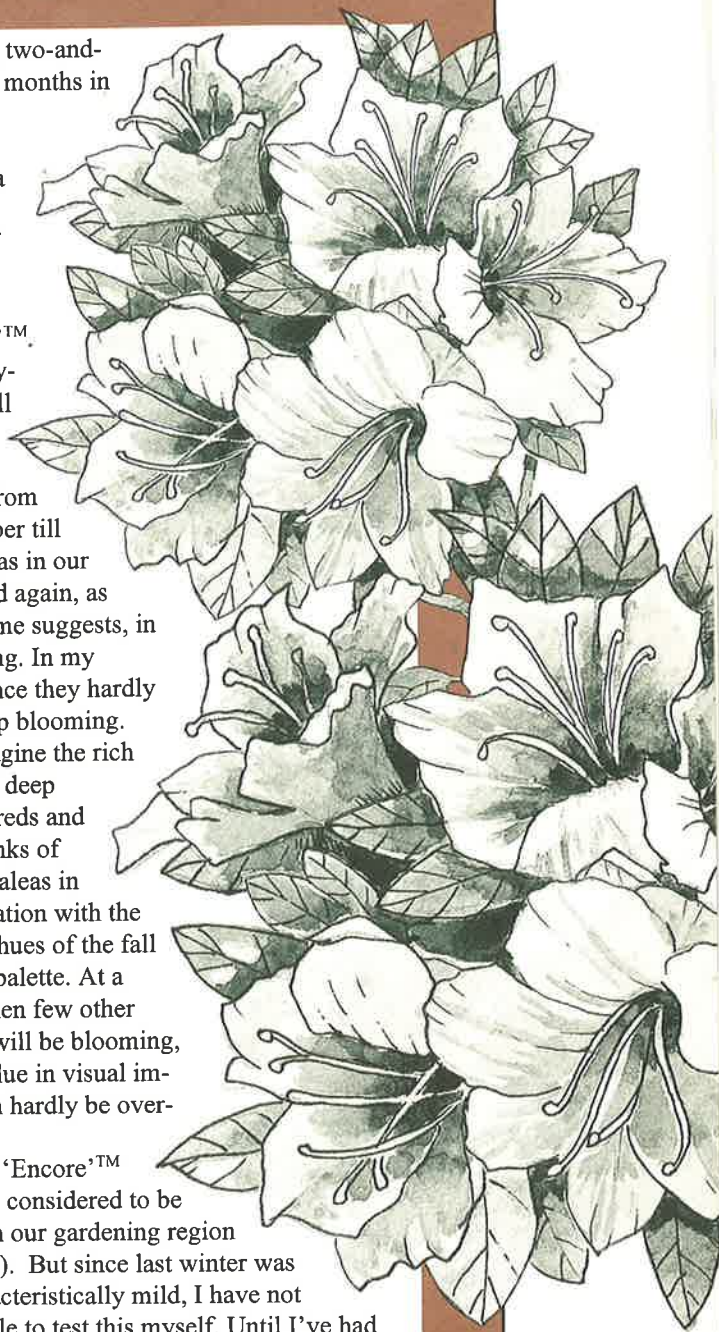
In Washington gardens, spring means azaleas. Masses of this favorite shrub regale us in full, colorful abundance in underplantings around dogwoods, dressing up borders, and in breathtaking excess in the National Arboretum's rolling hillsides. By choosing the right combinations of early and late blooming varieties, the azalea flowering season can easily

last over two-and-one-half months in spring.

Now there is a new series of azaleas called 'Encore'™. These hybrids will bloom in the fall — from September till Christmas in our area, and again, as their name suggests, in the spring. In my experience they hardly ever stop blooming. Just imagine the rich purples, deep orange-reds and neon pinks of these azaleas in combination with the vibrant hues of the fall garden palette. At a time when few other shrubs will be blooming, their value in visual impact can hardly be overstated.

The 'Encore'™ series is considered to be hardy in our gardening region (Zone 7). But since last winter was uncharacteristically mild, I have not been able to test this myself. Until I've had more experience with the degree of cold hardiness of this series, I'd recommend that you plant them in a protected area and pamper them with extra mulch and perhaps a burlap screen in winter.

Although they may require a little extra care, I'm sure you'll find the 'Encore'™ fall-blooming azaleas well worth the effort. Is there a place for these beauties in your landscape this fall? ☺



Encore™ Azalea



# Selections for Fall and Winter Beauty

— by Chris Upton, Behnke Nurseries Garden Design Consultant

Cooler days, clearer air, bluer skies, longer nights; fall rescues us every year from the stultifying subtropical heat of Washington's summer. I am drawn into the garden and find myself seeking work that will bring me closer to the plants. While the spectacle of fall foliage dominates the outdoors, breaking down the divisions between our garden and the gardens of our neighbors, trees which go unnoticed much of the rest of the year command our attention and admiration. Fruits which have not yet colored assume their mature hues while the seed heads of the taller ornamental grasses extend into the azure sky. It is an exhilarating season and perhaps the fall garden merits more attention than it usually gets.

The garden chrysanthemum, with its tremendous range of colors, flower forms, and bloom periods, is the queen of the fall garden. Behnke garden mums are unrivaled. They are grown in containers at our Largo production facility. If you want the best flower show ever, buy your plants barely in bloom, instead of waiting until the flowers are mostly open. They establish much more easily and, with a more extensive root system in place when the plant blooms, the flowers frequently last longer.

There are other chrysanthemums which, although perhaps not as spectacular, certainly deserve a place in our gardens. *Dendranthema x rubellum* in its several varieties is a dependable hardy perennial which will produce drifts of daisy flowers on stalks above masses of clean, dark-green foliage. It requires no dividing, no shearing, and no pinching to flower in mid-October. *Ajania pacifica* (formerly *Chrysanthemum pacificum*) has attractive foliage outlined in white and gold button flowers. (See page 2.)

While you are planting chrysanthemums, plant some pansies too. Pansies, when planted in the fall, will usually provide blooms into the Christmas holidays and, in mild years, all the way through winter. Even when they do go dormant,

the root systems they have developed allow them to take off like rockets in the spring, far surpassing spring-planted specimens. Each fall at Behnke's, a multitude of sizes and varieties of pansies is available in an astonishing palette of colors. These are economically priced and transplant readily into the garden.

An advantage to planting fall blooming bulbs in the fall is that they often provide almost immediate gratification. It is not unusual to see *Colchicum* bulbs blooming in the loose bulb bin here at Behnke's, goblet shaped flowers in various shades of pink or white — like giant crocuses. (Plant *Colchicum* away from spring bulbs and perennials as the coarse foliage dies miserably just as the late spring perennials are blooming!) Autumn crocus look like smaller versions of *Colchicum* and will also frequently bloom the first fall season they are planted.

Two relatives of the florist's cyclamen are long-lived, trouble-free, fall-blooming plants. *Cyclamen coum* and *Cyclamen hederifolium* both bloom in the fall, producing colonies of small butterfly-like flowers on short stalks. Leaves reminiscent of those of the florist cyclamen follow the flowers and persist through winter as a pleasant groundcover. Both do well situated at the base of a deciduous tree, perhaps where they can be seen through a window in a warm room!

It seems that we are always searching for evergreen plants which will grow in shady areas. *Osmanthus heterophyllus*, and *Eleagnus pungens*, along with the hybrid *Eleagnus x ebbingii* 'Gilt Edge' are broadleaf evergreens which not only grow in the shade of an open deciduous woodland, but bloom in the fall with de-

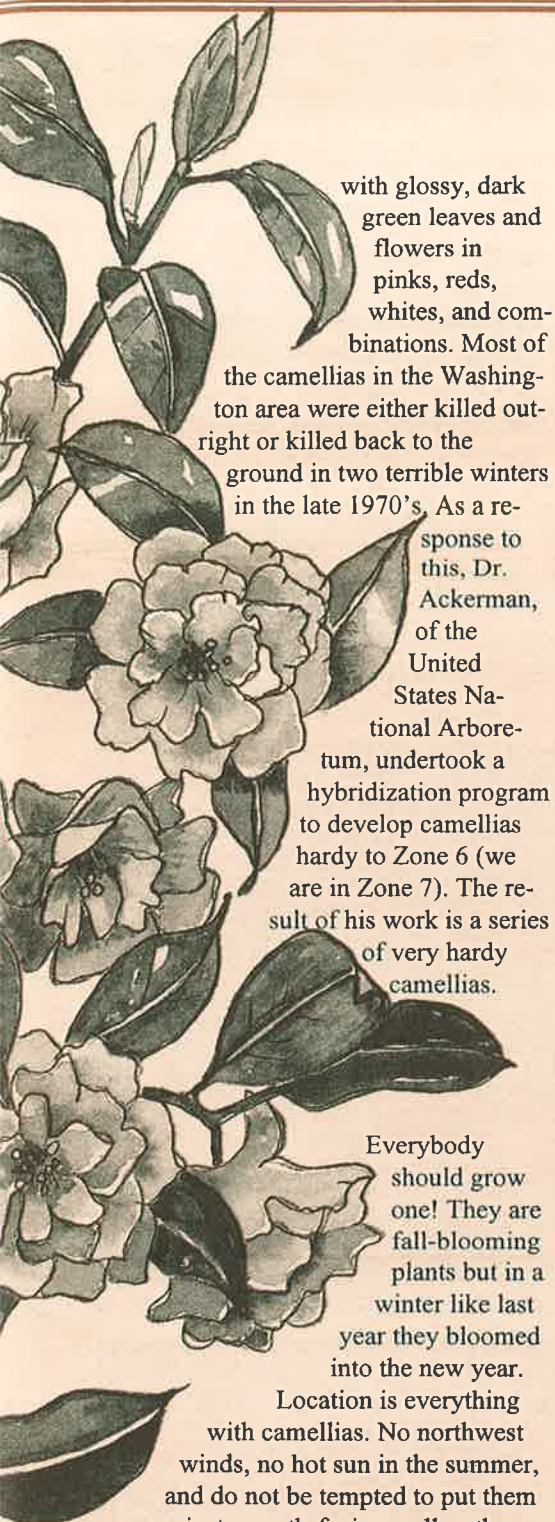
licious fragrances that travel far through the light air of autumn. Even specimens far from the house can be depended upon to perfume the air around the dwelling. 'Gilt Edge' is a particularly attractive plant with 3-4 inch olive green leaves whose outer edges are banded in gold. It is a wonderful evergreen to cut and bring in the house for fragrant winter arrangements.

Camellias are evergreens



*Camellia sasanqua*





with glossy, dark green leaves and flowers in pinks, reds, whites, and combinations. Most of the camellias in the Washington area were either killed outright or killed back to the ground in two terrible winters in the late 1970's. As a response to this, Dr. Ackerman, of the United States National Arboretum, undertook a hybridization program to develop camellias hardy to Zone 6 (we are in Zone 7). The result of his work is a series of very hardy camellias.

Everybody should grow one! They are fall-blooming plants but in a winter like last year they bloomed into the new year.

Location is everything with camellias. No northwest winds, no hot sun in the summer, and do not be tempted to put them against a south-facing wall as they will heat up on sunny days only to be suddenly cooled when the sun goes down. Behnke's carries a selection of these hardy camellias including 'Winter's Charm', 'Winter's Star', and 'Star of Ashton'.

Winter is an interesting time in the garden in the Washington area. Berries,

bark, buds, twigs, and evergreen leaves provide interest in winter, but why stop there? Since we can, let's have some flowers between New Year's Day and the end of February.

Fragrant wintersweet, *Chimonanthus praecox*, is a wonderfully fragrant deciduous shrub that blooms from December to March. Flowers and fragrance in the middle of winter! Other than the flowers, nothing else distinguishes this medium-sized shrub, so you want to site it where it is not front and center, perhaps in a hedgerow or another area with low visibility. Do not be deterred; its fragrance is such that I would plant it beside our front door were there no alternative.

Overlapping and extending the flowering period of wintersweet is the fragrant honeysuckle, *Lonicera fragrantissima* — a medium shrub with a wonderful citrus-flavored scent. Both of these plants, which are perfectly hardy with no disease or pest problems, will flower with only a half day's sun, and neither is particular as to soil or watering.

Winter jasmine, *Jasminum nudiflorum*, sounds like a fragrant plant but it is not. Arching green stems bear yellow flowers sporadically from January to March. This is yet another plant that will bloom with a minimum of sun and give us flowers at a dark time of the year.

*Daphne odora*, or winter daphne, is a plant that I coveted for years long ago when unusual plants were far less readily available. Louise Beebe Wilder, in her classic *The Fragrant Garden*, quotes an anonymous source as claiming winter daphne to be the most wonderfully fragrant plant in the world. I do know that it has a lovely fragrance, and, blooming anytime from January on, provides solace during what might otherwise be a bleak period. The plant itself is a small evergreen and the usual, more vigorous, form has gold variegation. It does best in well-amended soil on the east side of a building where the sun, available on winter mornings, will bring it into bloom.

Two perennials, Lenten rose and

Christmas rose, respectively *Helleborus orientalis* and *Helleborus niger*, prefer the same situation and also enjoy well amended soil. The Lenten rose, as its name would suggest, blooms somewhat later than Christmas rose and is the much easier of the two to grow. It is a charming, small evergreen which spreads slowly, eventually forming colonies. Flower color ranges from near green through purples, roses, to white. It is a carefree plant resisting diseases and untroubled by pests, asking only that tattered old foliage be removed once a year.

Oddly enough, there is a bulb which is effective in winter for its foliage! *Arum italicum* 'Pictum' or variegated Italian arum, is related to philodendrons but perfectly hardy in our area. Its variegated arrowhead-shaped leaves appear in fall and last through winter — disappearing in spring before the curious green-purple spathe-type flowers appear. Later in the summer a stalk appears, atop which sits a cluster of brilliant red berries. This is a good plant to provide some visual interest in an area visited regularly in winter.

Many of the smaller bulbs start blooming in late January, including snowdrops, *Galanthus spp.*, winter aconites, *Eranthis hyemalis*, and a number of early flowering crocus species and varieties.

Since my children entered elementary school, it seems that every year school starts and activities begin — fall sports, then the holidays, one after another until we arrive somehow in the middle of January with spring two months away and winter brown and gray everywhere. That's when I find it pleasant to be able to look out a window and see something in bloom, or to walk through the garden and catch the perfume of a winter flower — or discover a bloom coaxed open by the warmth of the winter sun. ☺

Chris Upton is Behnke's Garden Design Consultant. For information about his services, call 301-937-1100.



## Choosing Colorful Houseplants

—by Mike Bader, Beltsville Houseplant Department Manager

**B**ring your favorite colors indoors by choosing from the impressive selection of houseplants found at all three Behnke locations. Here are a few tips to make your selection easier and more successful:

- Most houseplants look best when they are massed together in a group, either with similar plants or with an assortment of different varieties that all require the same growing conditions. In addition, the water vapor given off by the group humidifies the surrounding air to create a more favorable environment.
- When planning a grouping of plants, consider their colors and textures in conjunction with those of the room to achieve an overall harmony.
- The plants we grow indoors are really outdoor plants, generally from warmer climates. It's helpful to find out where your plant originated, and try to re-create those conditions. Or, more simply, select plants which thrive in a situation similar to the existing conditions of your home.
- Foliage plants have a longer life span than most flowering plants and are particularly useful in partially shaded rooms. You may be tempted by a plant's flower rather than by its foliage, but if you take a closer look, you will discover that foliage plants are more colorful and varied than you previously imagined.
- Many decorative flowering plants, such as indoor mums, azaleas, and cyclamen, should be chosen as short term investments to brighten up your home. Combining plants in various shades of the same color will create a subtle mood, whereas complimentary colors will produce a bold, enlivening effect.

The plants in the tables below will be arriving over the next three months at all Behnke locations. As always, the professionals in our Houseplant Department are prepared to help you select your plants and advise you on their care. Please allow us to assist you in any way.



Silver Vase Plant  
(*Aechmea fasciata*)

Blooming Plants								
	WHITE	PINK	MAUVE	PURPLE	RED	ORANGE	YELLOW	CREAM
<b>African Violet</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<b>Orchids:</b>								
<i>Phalaenopsis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
<i>Dendrobium</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
<i>Oncidium</i>							✓	
<b>Indoor Florist Mum</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Kalanchoe</b>		✓			✓	✓	✓	
<b>Ornamental Peppers</b>	fruit changes color:			✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Cyclamen</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<b>Indoor Florist Azalea</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<b>Bromeliads:</b> Silver Vase	✓	✓						
<i>Guzmania</i>				✓	✓	✓		
<b>Gloxinia</b>	✓	✓		✓	✓			
<b>Indoor Hibiscus</b>		✓			✓	✓		
<b>Rieger Begonia</b>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	

Colorful Foliage Plants								
	WHITE	PINK	MAUVE	PURPLE	RED	ORANGE	YELLOW	CREAM
<b>Croton</b>					✓	✓	✓	
<b>Dieffenbachia</b>							✓	✓
<b>Pothos</b>	✓						✓	✓
<b>Syngoniums (Arrowhead)</b>	✓	✓	✓					
<b>Zebrina pendula</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<b>Rex Begonia</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<b>Zebra Plant</b>	✓						✓	✓
<b>Dracaena Varieties</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
<b>Spider Plant</b>	✓							✓
<b>Polka Dot Plant</b>	✓	✓			✓			
<b>Peperomia Varieties</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<b>Purple Passion</b>				✓				

## Autumn Care of the Perennial Border

—by Melodie Likel, Potomac Perennial Specialist

*F*all is the time the perennial garden ever so gradually sheds its summer finery to don the bold shades of the cooler season. The gardener assists in the transition by careful and thoughtful trimming, dead-heading, and staking.

### Trimming and Pruning

Any plants that are clearly dormant, damaged or unsightly can be cut to the ground, leaving only an inch or two of stems. This makes locating the plants easier in early spring. Peonies almost certainly fall into this category, as do many lilies. However, keep plants with good looking foliage in the garden even after all blooms have faded. The extra food the plant stores will improve vigor and flowering for next summer, and, looked at from a designer's viewpoint, the foliage provides the perfect backdrop for the flowers of fall. Removing entire plants may leave the garden sparse, especially if spring and summer flowers predominated in the original plan. Study carefully before cutting.

### Tidying the Beds

Fall is the time for cleanup. Trim any diseased plants and discard, but do not compost. Pests such as iris borer overwinter in the debris left in the garden after frost kills the foliage. Removing all spent plant materials will go far to controlling potential pest and disease problems in the coming year.

Fall is the time to tackle weeds that have been hidden between and underneath larger plants in the garden. Take the time to dig out deeply rooted culprits such as dandelion, dock, and clover — they'll be gone forever. Doing just a superficial job in fall will ensure their survival and root growth over winter and a stronger, more obnoxious weed next spring.

Plants that may have overrun their allotted space or may have proven unsuitable for the garden can be removed or weeded back into bounds. The silver foliage of artemisia and lamb's ears is lovely in the flower garden but most varieties regularly need attention to keep the

vigorous growth under control.

Fall is also the time to evaluate the garden's performance. Did plants work well together and provide good color and foliage interest? Were some plants crowded and others skimpy and lackluster in their growth? Fall is the time to reorganize and rearrange. Warm soil and cool air temperatures make fall the best time to plant a garden. Root development

*“Creating the perfect garden is a puzzle that has more than one solution”*

is rapid and the plant will be well established by spring. So if the garden needs a remodeling, now is the time to do it.

Creating the perfect garden is a puzzle that has more than one solution. Keep experimenting until the result is pleasing to you. Don't be afraid to give away or throw out plants which do not work.

### Propagating by Division

Early fall is the best time to divide many perennials. For example, Oriental and trumpet lilies should be divided or moved just after the foliage dies down. Peony clumps should be cut back and thoroughly watered, then lifted. The roots should be rinsed free of soil and the root mass cut or sawed into segments, each having three to five eyes. Peonies may take one to two years to recover from division but after that will bloom for years with no attention.\* Astilbes are best divided in fall as well. Cut back the foliage; then dig clumps and cut them apart with a sharp knife or spade. Replant and water well.

Daylilies can be divided at any time, but in early fall the waning foliage can

easily be cut back to 6 to 8 inches, making the process easier. Dig the clump, wash off most of the soil and separate the new divisions by hand or with a spade. Replant in freshly-worked, amended soil and water well.

Perennials benefit from having the soil between plants gently loosened from time to time to prevent compaction. This can be done in fall when cleaning and cutting back. Mulching with a layer of compost improves soil fertility and provides nutrients necessary for vigorous root growth during the last months of the growing season.

Decide which plants will be left standing for winter interest. Grasses, especially Miscanthus varieties, hold up well and provide structure and form in the winter landscape. Other perennials, such as Russian sage, purple coneflower, and black-eyed Susan, look lovely covered with a dusting of snow or glistening with light frost.

While you are trimming and dividing, the glorious plants of fall will be putting on a show that is unequalled in any season. Vibrant asters tumble out of bounds covered with thousands of starry flowers. Tall and elegant grasses rustle and sway, their downy flowers atop slender stems. Autumn crocus lends its lavender-pink presence and brings memories and anticipation of spring. Japanese anemone flowers dance and flutter high above the plant's foliage, and mums in many hues brighten the garden's sunny areas.

In shady corners, toad lilies proudly display their exquisite, spotted flowers, and plumbago sports its cobalt blooms while its foliage turns to red-bronze with the onset of cool weather.

As each year in the garden draws to a close, the gardener is enriched by the beauty of nature, empowered with knowledge of plants and gardens and overflowing with anticipation and hope for the year ahead. ♪

\*Complete directions are provided in the Behnke Nurseries Peony brochure.



## Favorite Daffodils

—by Becky Heath, Co-author of *The Daffodil Book*

**D**affodils are the ultimate perennial because they're inexpensive, bloom year after year and voles and deer don't like them! What else could you ask for? Selecting the right one depends on what's important to you. You can choose early, late, and midseason daffodils that will provide a long succession of bloom. Consider rockgarden narcissus, which are relatively short, or tall stately varieties with long stems for cutting. Of course there are scores of colors and flower forms to choose from, as well as some fragrant varieties for added pleasure.

If you're looking for an early daffodil to bring your garden out of the winter doldrums, choose 'February Gold'. This intermediate-sized, all-yellow type can bring warmth to your garden even on a cold, dreary, late winter day. Others that bloom relatively early are 'Cragford' and 'Bridal Crown'. These two also have the additional characteristic of being wonderfully fragrant.

If you're looking for daffodils that extend the season and bloom later than most, look for 'Actaea', a pristine white daffodil with a red-rimmed, yellow cup; 'Yellow Cheerfulness', an all-yellow

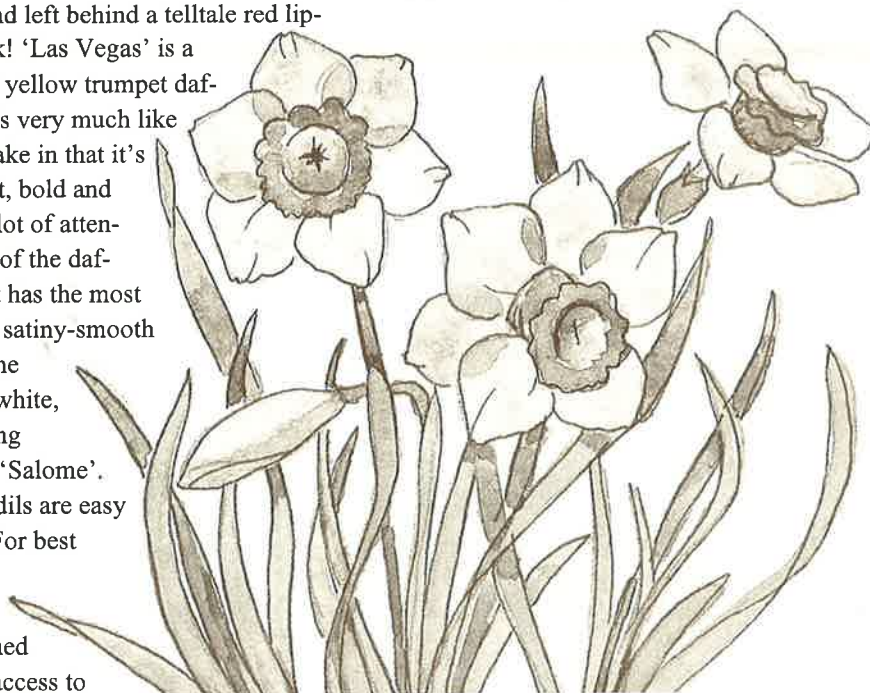
double; or 'Sundial', a tiny yellow miniature with a sweet fragrance.

An unusually colored daffodil is 'Ambergate' which has "russet" petals and a brick red cup. You'll get a feeling of being in the tropics if you have the yellow and red double daffodil, 'Tahiti', in your garden. Although 'Delibes' is a regular-shaped, large-cupped, yellow daffodil, it looks as if someone kissed the cup and left behind a telltale red lipstick mark! 'Las Vegas' is a white and yellow trumpet daffodil that's very much like its namesake in that it's big, bright, bold and attracts a lot of attention. One of the daffodils that has the most exquisite, satiny-smooth petals is the pink and white, long-lasting flower of 'Salome'.

Daffodils are easy to grow. For best results, they need well-drained soil, and access to

moisture — try to avoid planting them under shallow-rooted trees. They prefer full sun, although most will tolerate a half-day of shade.

Whatever types of daffodils you choose, you'll be rewarded each spring with masses of cheerful flowers. No bulb offers a stronger guarantee of success, nor performs so triumphantly for so many years in the garden. ☺



*Behnke's Randy Best on  
The Home and Garden Network this fall!  
See page one*

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