

This Week in the Garden: “No April Fool’s Joke?” - April 4, 2020
by Don Hyatt

I must admit that I have been expecting an April Fool’s joke from Mother Nature. When spring is early, I often get a devastating freeze just as flowers open. That hasn’t happened so far. Temperatures dropped into the middle 30s this week but I had no frost. The cool weather is just making flowers last longer. Yay!!

Camellias are excellent rhododendron companions and they really have been spectacular this year. I want to apologize for an error I made in my first newsletter supplement. The pink camellia I admired is not ‘Pink Frost’ but ‘Pink Icicle’. That plant impressed me two weeks ago but it is incredible now. Old flowers remain while new buds open so I have solid masses of blooms.

Since camellias lack fragrance, I planted Viburnum ‘Mohawk’ nearby. An introduction from the National Arboretum, it is extremely fragrant. The clusters of small white flowers give a feathered landscape effect like Baby’s Breath but it also perfumes the entire area.

Harold Belcher sent some lovely pictures from his garden including camellias and the impressive patch of bloodroot pictured below. Thanks, Harold!



Camellia ‘Pink Icicle’ Photo: D. Hyatt



Viburnum ‘Mohawk’ Photo: D. Hyatt



Camellia ‘April Remembered’ Photo: H. Belcher



Bloodroot Photo: H. Belcher



Camellia ‘Pink Perfection’ Photo: H. Belcher



Entry Gate at Hidden View Farm Photo: D. Hyatt



Admiring the Camellias D. Hyatt

Hidden View Farm was my final outing before I started isolating to try to avoid the virus. That was March 17. Carol Segree and I discussed plans with Richard Bradshaw about holding our spring flower show & plant sale there. We have canceled, of course, but I wanted to share some photos.

The estate is gorgeous and his camellias, hellebores, and bulbs were in prime form. He has *Edgeworthia chrysantha*, the Chinese Paper Bush, scattered about. For a deciduous shrub, it has great winter interest. Large, silvery buds hang from branch tips and look like little Christmas ornaments. In spring, they open into clusters of fragrant yellow flowers.

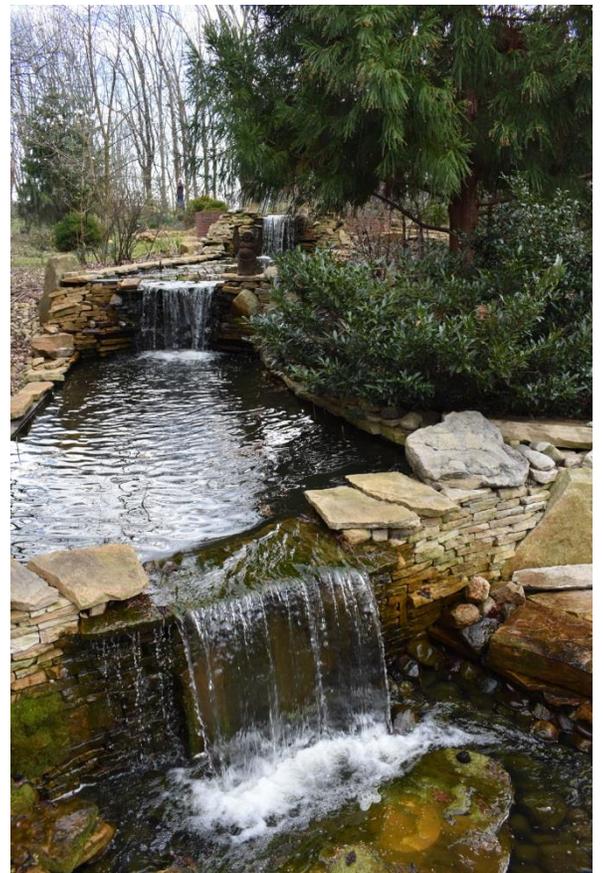
We were very impressed with a new walkway Richard had just installed days before. Using weathered brick and curving it through existing beds, it looked decades old.



Edgeworthia chrysantha 'Snow Cream' D. Hyatt



Richard's New Walk D. Hyatt



Richard's Waterfall D. Hyatt



New Walk through Existing Daffodil Beds D. Hyatt



‘P.J.M.’

Photo: D. Jolley



‘Gable’s Early Bird’

Photo: D. Jolley



Twin Leaf

Photo: D. Jolley

Doug Jolley sent more superb photographs from his West Virginia garden. Thanks, Doug! Flowers of ‘P.J.M.’ and ‘Gable’s Early Bird’ look fresh after a rain.

I love wildflowers and he sent photos of several we rarely see. The Twin Leaf, *Jeffersonia diphylla*, is very hard to catch in bloom. It looks similar to bloodroot but the flowers are very short-lived and only last a day or two. He sent photos of the beautiful mottled foliage of *Trillium sessile* and the cute “pantaloon” blooms of Dutchman’s Breeches, *Dicentra cucullaria*.



Pieris floribunda

Photo: D. Jolley



Trillium sessile & Dutchman’s Breeches D. Jolley

Doug included a photo of his *Pieris floribunda*, the Fetterbush. It is native to the upper elevations in the Southern Appalachians and does not take the heat. It is very difficult for us to grow and I lost mine last year. The flower clusters are upright rather than pendulous like the Asian species we can grow, *Pieris japonica*.

I have a couple of varieties of *P. japonica* and my favorite is a variegated form I got many years ago. It grows slowly, and has green leaves edged with white and white flowers. It is a real show-stopper in spring when its striking, rosy red new growth emerges.



Pieris japonica ‘Variegata’

Photo: D. Hyatt

Londontown Gardens is closed until further notice so we will not be able to visit the memorial tribute we installed for Gray Carter last year. We thank the Director of Horticulture, Meenal Harankhedkar, who sent photos she took of camellias, magnolias, and cherry blossoms.



Magnolia 'Stellata' & Camellia 'Herme' Londontown



Magnolia 'Galaxy' & Cherry Tree Londontown



Camellia Sport & Yoshino Cherry Londontown



R. metternichii 'Wada's Form' D. Hyatt

I took some photos of a few rhododendrons that are blooming now. My first elepidote to bloom was *R. degronianum* ssp. *heptamerum*. Still in protest, I use its former name, *R. metternichii*. Much shorter!

'Kehr's White Ruffles' is a lovely large-flowered lepidote and really stands out against the smaller, bright pink blooms of 'Olga Mezitt'. It opens blush but turns white as it ages. My *R. schlippenbachii*, a deciduous azalea from Korea, looks like *R. vaseyi* on steroids. I have a nice light pink form. *R. keiskei* is opening now but my plants did suffer in the drought.



'Kehr's White Ruffles' D. Hyatt

Have you made an arrangement with flowers from your garden? Please send me a picture! -DH



R. keiskei D. Hyatt



R. schlippenbachii D. Hyatt

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