

THE PURDUE LANDSCAPE REPORT

Top 10 Spring Flowering Shrubs

By: Amanda Bailey Mosiman, bailey1@purdue.edu

Spring is finally here! Everywhere you look, one can find some spring color around. Some of the first plants to peek out of the ground are spring-flowering bulbs like crocus, daffodil, and tulip. But there are some beautiful spring time shrubs you can add to your yard to be the first in the neighborhood with spring interest. Below, you'll find a top 10 list of spring-flowering shrubs (in order of flower appearance).

Witch-hazel (*Hamamelis x intermedia*) Perhaps even earlier-flowering than Forsythia, is 'Arnold Promise' witch-hazel. This shrub can flower starting in late winter (unless we have unusually cold winter weather like polar vortices) and keep going all the way into spring. Bright flowers are yellow with red tinges, though there are red-flowering cultivars available. Witch-hazel can be grown as a shrub or a small tree and offers some yellow/orange/red fall color. It's native!



Figure 1. Witch-hazel is one of the first shrubs to bloom in the spring. Though similar to forsythia, it typically flowers a couple of weeks earlier.

Forsythia (*Forsythia x intermedia*) Forsythia is the traditional first-flowering plant in the spring. Hardy plants, their bright yellow

blooms can catch your eye anywhere. There are new cultivars out.

Quince (*Chaenomeles speciosa*) In mid spring, you'll find these shrubs covered with flowers. There are several cultivars and you may see white-flowering plants ('Jet Trails'), red-flowering plants ('Texas Scarlet') or even large, double, fluffy, peach-pink flowers ('Cameo'). After the show, this plant tends to fade into the background, but it's a great native addition.

Koreanspice Viburnum (*Viburnum carlesii*) Koreanspice viburnum blooms in late April with blooms that are pink/red while they are still in buds, opening to white flowers that are each a half inch wide. The flowers are presented on dense 2-3 inch groupings called cymes (semi-snowball) and very pleasantly fragrant. And luck of all luck, they have nice, clean leaves in the summer and great fall color. Can't beat that in a multi-season shrub.

Flowering Almond (*Prunus glandulosa*) Here's a small plant that grows well in full sun and its lovely. Flowering almond, particularly the cultivar 'Rosea Plena' has tons of pink flowers (double—lots of petals). Some cultivars have white flowers, and all present in mid to late spring.

Shadblow Serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*) A multi-season-interest plant, serviceberry offers white flowers on 2-3 inch long inflorescences in April, which leads to sweet, juicy black fruit in the summer. Some plants can also have decent fall color (yellow with hints of orange and red). Serviceberry grows by suckering so it's perhaps not a great choice for a small yard.

Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*). The beautiful purple flowers (many, many colors are available, but purple is most common) are wonderfully fragrant in most of spring. They may only bloom for 2 weeks, but man those 2 weeks are worth having a lilac in your garden! Takes me straight back to my childhood.

Black Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) An adaptable species, this plant is known for long-lasting black fruit in the fall and wine-red fall color. Spring flowers are white, presented in groups of 9-20 resulting in 1 to 1.5 inch groupings covering the plant in May. This species can spread and colonize large areas,

which makes for a striking mass effect in the spring. Small plant (under 5 feet) thrives in part shade to full sun.

Mockorange (*Philadelphus coronarius*) Fans of mockorange are serious about their use in the landscape. These plants can take care of themselves and they'll reward you every May/June with white, fragrant flowers that are 1 to 1.5 inches wide.

Siberian Peashrub (*Caragana arborescens*) Granted, this is a great shrub for harsh sites (poor soils, drought, alkaline soil, cold, wind), but it's unusual and doesn't take much care. Leaves are pea-green and emerge with the yellow flowers in May. Later in the summer the fruit of the flowers, a narrow pod, makes a popping sound when it opens.

Remember, plants with more than one season of interest are like hitting the landscape jackpot. So, if you've chosen one of these

plants because you love the flowers in the spring, just be aware that it may need to fade into the background for the rest of the year. Having said that, plants that usher in the new season are anticipated, loved and enjoyed. Make sure you've got some of these in your neighborhood for a dose of early spring joy.

- Adapted from Horticulture Newsletter – Cheryl Boyer – Kansas Extension

Amanda Bailey

Extension Educator – Ag and Natural Resources

Purdue Extension – Warrick County

bailey1@purdue.edu

812 897 6100

It is the policy of the Purdue University that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue is an Affirmative Action Institution. This material may be available in alternative formats. 1-888-EXT-INFO Disclaimer: Reference to products in this publication is not intended to be an endorsement to the exclusion of others which may have similar uses. Any person using products listed in this publication assumes full responsibility for their use in accordance with current directions of the manufacturer.

Purdue Landscape Report © Purdue University - purduelandscape.org