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Flowering Azaleas, Camellia, Crepe Myrtle (crape Myrtle), And Other Important Landscape Shrubs

By Pat Malcolm

Landscape shrubs are divided into two main categories: Evergreen shrubs grown primarily for the green leaves, and shrubs that are grown for flowers. Some of the flowering shrubs that are grown for flowers are also evergreen, such as: Abelia, Azalea, Banana shrub, Bottlebrush, Bridal Wreath, Gardenia, Ligustrum, Oleander, and Tea Olive. Azaleas and Camellias are the most important of the flowering shrubs.

Flowering Evergreen Shrubs

Azaleas are perhaps the most well known evergreen flowering shrubs grown in America. Hybrids of azaleas are now planted in Northern States. Formosa flowering azaleas are best known and many colors and cultivars are there for the gardener to buy. Other azalea categories are Glenn Dale azaleas, Kurume Hybrid azaleas, Nuccio Hybrid azaleas, Satsuki Hybrid azaleas, and Native American azaleas, the Florida Flame, Rhodendron austrinum, and the Piedmont, Rhodendrom canescens. Formosa azalea cultivars are: Bicolor, Duc De Rohan, Dutchess of Cypress, George L. Tabor, GG. Gerbin, Lavender, Little John, Madonna White, Magenta, Pink, Pride of Mobile, Red Formosa, Southern Charm, Violet. Glenn Dale azaleas are Fashion and H.H. Hume. Kurume azaleas are Coral Bells, Pink Ruffles, Red Ruffles, and Snow. The Satsuki hybrid azaleas are Gumpo Pink, Gumpo White, Higasa, and Wakebishu.

Camellias are best known for the fall, winter, and spring flowers in the South. Fall and Winter flowering shrubs are Camellia sasanqua; Camellias that flower in many colors of red, pink, white, variegated, and purple. The major winter-spring flowering camellia types are called Camellia japonica, and many old cultivar listings are available to buy from an Internet nursery. Cultivars like: Alba Plena, Emily Wilson, Jesse Burgess, Mathotiana Rubra, Peppermint, Pink Perfection, Pot of Gold, and Professor Sargeant, Rosea,

Abelia x Grandiflora shrubs are a great improvement over the old common Abelia shrub. The tubular clusters of pink-white flowers are fragrant and flowering abelia shrubs are treasured as a long season

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bloomer that is cold hard from zones 5 - 9.

Banana shrub, *Michelia fuggii*, commonly is grown in gardens, much like Camellia, known for the scent of ripe bananas, when the small, white, magnolia-like flowers open on hot summer afternoons. Banana shrub is often planted near door entrances to greet visitors with the aroma of a banana.

Scarlet Bottlebrush Shrub, *Callistemon citrinus*, is not known for its cold hardiness (zone 8 - 11), but the red flowers of bottlebrush are brilliant when they bloom in early summer.

Bridal Wreath, *Spirea nipponica*, is also known as Snowmound Spirea, and is a vast improvement over the old yard white spirea, found in heirloom gardens. Bridal Wreath Spirea is very cold hardy to zones 4 - 8.

Gardenia shrubs, *Gardenia jasmionoides*, is the dwarf-form of the sweetly scented Gardenia. Ever blooming Gardenia shrub, *Gardenia jasminoides* 'Veitchii' is a very improved gardenia, with grafted and

large shrubs producing double-white gardenia blooms. The rare fragrance of everblooming gardenias is a growing, worthwhile garden experience.

Ligustrum, *Ligustrum texanum*, is grown in some gardens as a shrub with long seasonal, white flowers, that sweetly scent a passerby with a pleasing, distinct ligustrum fragrance. Ligustrum, when mature, can be stripped of lower branches, to grow into a small flowering tree, often planted at entrances as specimen trees. This plant is popular at the famous hotel resort at the Cloister, operating at Sea Island, Ga. Other cultivars of Ligustrum are planted, and most commonly grown, as privacy hedges, or to border wide sidewalks in urban settings.

Oleander, *Nerium oleander*, is among the most salt water tolerant choices for planting in coastal gardens. Oleander shrubs flower in colors of pink, purple, red, salmon pink, white, and yellow. Very old oleander plants can grow into small flowering trees. Oleander beings blooming in May and flowers last until fall. Insects and disease avoid oleanders.

Tea Olive, *Osmanthus fragrans*, is very popular as a sweet scented shrub that begins blooming in fall and continues to fill the air with fragrance into spring. The aroma of Tea Olive flowers is similar to that of ripe apricots. Tea olive is an evergreen tree.

Yellow Rose of Texas, *Kerria japonica* 'Pleniflora', blooms in late spring, growing bright yellow flowers thickly clustered along long arching stems. *Kerria japonica* is very cold hardy in zones 4 - 8.

Deciduous Flowering Shrubs

Crape Myrtle (Crepe Myrtle) *Lagerstroemia x Fauriei* hybrids are also called Japanese Crape Myrtle (Crepe Myrtle). These shrubs are often grown as shrubs, but many of the new cultivars are marketed as trees, and can easily grow to 30 feet tall, with trunks growing in diameter to over one foot. It is difficult to place boundaries on the growth size, because newly introduced hybrids have not aged enough to predict the ultimate limits of size fifty years from now. Old species of Crape Myrtle were

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Lagerstroemia indica, that bloomed attractively, but new hybrid Crepe Myrtle shrubs bloom in fiery clear colors for as much as 45 - 60 days, and then flower again in the fall. Crepe Myrtle flowers are beautiful, but the new peeling bark colors provide a new and different attraction after the winter cold freezes the leaves. Crepe Myrtle have been placed in several color categories: Red flowered Tonto; White flowered Acoma and Natchez; Lavender flowered Muscogee; Pale Pink flowered Biloxi; Dark Pink flowered Miami and Tuscarora; Intense Pink flowered Sioux; and Dream Pink;

Hydrangea, *Hydrangea macrophylla*, and Oak Leaf *Hydrangea*, *Hydrangea quercifolia*, are the two important species of the hydrangea group. *Hydrangea macrophylla* has been much improved to create hybrid flowers of pink, red, white, blue, and purple. Some of these colors of hydrangea are stable, and not subject to change with the changing of the soil acidity (soil pH). *Hydrangea macrophylla* flowers come in various new hybrids, such as Cardinal Red, *macrophylla* 'Cardinal Red'; Lacecap 'Blue Billow', *microphylla* 'Blue Billow'; Lacecap 'Pink Diamond', *microphylla* 'Pink Diamond'; Lacecap 'Variegated', *microphylla* 'Variegated'; Oak leaf hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia*, produces giant white flowers that perch above a 6 foot shrub with large leaves, shaped like oak tree leaves.

New Zealand Tea Shrub, *Leptospermum scorparium*, is a winter and early spring flowering shrub in colors of red and pink, that are cold hardy in zones 8 - 10.

Berry Evergreen Shrubs

Valuable evergreen shrubs for garden landscapes are 2 types of *Mahonia* that grow thorny type-holly shape leaves, that in the spring, flower and the blooms grow into colorful berries. *Mahonia Featherleaf* shrub, *Mahonia japonica*, flowers turn into attractive grape-like clusters of fruit, that are cold hardy to zones 5 - 8. Chinese *Mahonia*, *Mahonia fortunei*, produces short spikes of yellow flowers, cold hardy to zones 8 - 9.

Nandina shrubs, *Nandina domestica*, is a great plant for all seasons. The canes of *nandina* produce fragrant clusters of flowers in the spring, that turn into green, orange, and red persistent berry clusters, that will only fall off next year after new flowers appear. *Nandina domestica* can be grown as a foundation landscape plant, next to houses, to replace overgrown azaleas. *Nandinas* rarely grow larger than 4 -5 feet, and will not block views from windows, like many foundation plants. Neat growing *nandina* is disease free, and can be found to buy at local nurseries, or mail order nursery sources. Dwarf *nandina* plants are called heavenly bamboo, and the dwarf cultivars are the best winter coloring *Nandina*, with brilliant crimson foliage, lasting from fall through winter. *Nandina* shrubs are cold hardy growing, when planted in zones 6 - 8.

Deciduous Shrubs With Berries

Beautyberry, *Callicarpa americana*, was discovered by William Bartram, the famous American botanist and explorer, who wrote in his book, *Travels*, records of this beautyberry with stems hidden in the fall with bright purple berry clusters encircling twigs after the leaves drop down from the fall frost. The white berry clusters of the white beautyberry shrub are quite stunning in the dark forest under story landscape.

Mock Orange shrub (*Philadelphus X Virginalis* 'Natchez') is an improvement of the heirloom native American plant that flowers in the late spring with citrus, orange, scented blooms. The Mock Orange shrub is rarely offered by mailorder nursery websites to buy. Many gardeners wanting a pleasant native shrub should buy the Mock Orange shrub.

Pyracantha, *Pyracantha coccinea*, is often grown to shut out unwanted visitors, because of its deadly thorns. The beauty of the berry clusters is undefinable in the winter and spring, when the leaves drop. The berries grow in large clusters of orange or red. *Pyracantha*, *Pyracantha coccinea*, will bloom fragrantly white in the spring, and will remind any burglar that he should not have visited that special execution-style garden. The two cultivars recommended for planting are *Pyracantha Victory*, *Pyracantha coccinea* 'Victory' and *Pyracantha Orange Berry*, *Pyracantha coccinea* 'Orange Berry'.

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7 Ways to Grow Flowers

By Johnny Greenthumb

7 Ways to Grow Flowers

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Flowering landscape trees are the crown jewels of the yard. Perhaps no other plants, individually, can have as great an impact on how a yard looks in spring. Browse the articles to which I've linked below for information on particular varieties of flowering landscape trees. Pictures are included.

Crape Myrtles: Landscape Trees of the South

A popular choice in flowering landscape trees for Southerners, crape myrtles have a long blooming period (mid-summer to fall). The blooming clusters of these flowering landscape trees come in pink, white, red and lavender. The clusters appear on the tips of new wood. Northerners can sometimes get away with treating these flowering landscape trees as perennials that die back in winter but come back in spring.

Trees

Not all specimens with a weeping habit are flowering landscape trees, but this article looks at several weeping varieties that do bloom, headed by four types of cherry. Saucer Magnolias

The size and shape of the blooms are what suggested the common name for these flowering landscape trees. Want a specimen with a brilliant bloom as big as a saucer? Access information on these beauties here.

Rose of Sharon

Although some people think of it as a landscape "tree" (because it gets tall and can be pruned so as to have a single trunk), rose of sharon is, in fact, a flowering shrub. The fact that it blooms relatively late — and for a long time — makes it a valuable plant for those looking to distribute their yard's color display throughout the growing season. Top 10 List of Flowering Landscape Trees and Shrubs for Spring |

This article features information on ten flowering landscape trees and shrubs that brighten our spring seasons. Included are redbud, callery pear and crabapple. Hawthorn: Late-Blooming Landscape Trees

This article offers information on Washington hawthorn trees, which are perhaps most valued for the time at which they bloom (late spring to early summer). Many of the popular flowering specimens bloom earlier in the spring, and while their blossoms are pleasant sights for eyes sore from winter's barrenness, they desert us too quickly!

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