

**February 2021**

## **THE WINTER GARDEN**

*THE GARDEN IS A LIFE TIME PROJECT. ONE OF MARVELOUS BEAUTY!*

It's February. As you look out at the garden, do you see bleak perennial flower beds. Look out each window of your home facing the garden and imagine having something interesting to see. Although you cannot plant at this time, begin planning what you will see to create interest for next winter. Go out-of-doors and place a garden stake to mark the spot for something of interest to purchase in the spring.

Leave standing ornamental grasses such as miscanthus and pennisetum which look wonderful most of the year. However, they may not look wonderful all winter here in New England. Heavy snow can push them down. Leave standing, perennials such as Sedum 'Autumn Joy', Calamint, Hellebores niger and orientalis. Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* spp. and cvs.) and Coneflowers (*Echinacea* spp. and cvs.)

Some plant suggestions:

For trees: Paperback maple (*Acer griseum*) with its exfoliating bark, or

Weeping Katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum* 'Pendula') is a beautiful tree, but with the leaves gone during the winter, you can enjoy the intricate pattern created by the weeping limbs.

For Shrubs:

Witch hazels are always one of the first shrubs to begin blooming in late winter and early spring. Consider (*Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Arnold Promise'), which has profuse, fragrant, yellow blossoms or (*Hamamelis* 'Diana') with red flowers. In March, consider Cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas*) with its many yellow flowers. There is golden Chamaecyparis, Boxwood, Red and Yellow Twig Dogwood; Winterberry\* (*Ilex verticillata*) and Meserve Hollies\* (*Ilex x meserveae* 'Blue Princess' and 'Blue Prince with red berries or 'China Girl' and 'China Boy' with yellow berries and Harry Lauder's Walking Stick (*Corylus avellana* 'Contorta'). Many choices.

Sydney Addelson, garden author, says a successful winter garden depends on its hardscaping: flagstone walk, bird bath or sculptures, architecture, trees and shrubs. So much to think about

Planting a winter garden can be challenging. Some research is needed.

Today much can be found on your computer including photographs of woody plants and perennials. Be especially conscious of our Hardiness Growing Zone 5-6a, about the height and width of a tree or shrub at maturity. Does it require sun or shade. What are its soil and water requirements. Think about choosing Native Plants. Begin with one site for your investigation so that you are not overwhelmed. A beautiful garden takes years to develop.

You may also delight the senses with chimes, mirrors, pinwheels or planted pots with evergreens and sculptures. Hardscaping elements such as fences, gateways and trellises also create Interest.

*\*Winterberry and Hollies are dioecious species, meaning female flowers and male flowers grow on separate plants. To get berries on a female plant, a male plant must be near.*

*\*\*\*Consider visiting Tower Hill Botanical Garden to view its winter garden.*