

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

NORTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

Japanese Flowering Apricot Brightens Winter

Helping
Carolinians
Increase Their
Knowledge of
Gardening,
Manage Their
Landscape
Investment &
Protect the
Environment

inside

2002
All-America
Selections
Winner

3 Enviro-Tip

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Spot

TOP AWARDS
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Mecklenburg County
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Printing Industry of the
Carolinas

A flowering tree any time of year is a glorious gift. A flowering tree in winter is pure delight. When winter days seem especially dreary, Japanese flowering apricot, *Prunus mume*, produces beautiful, delicate flowers with a rich fragrance that's certain to boost winter spirits.

Most varieties of Japanese flowering apricot bloom sporadically in late winter and early spring. Their season ranges from mid-February through mid-March in most of the state. Although the flowers may be frozen by a sudden cold snap, there is usually another flush of blooms that will open with the next warm spell. Flowers may be white, pink or red. In addition to providing flowers when little else is in bloom, most varieties will easily perfume a small garden. Branches can be cut to bring early spring blooms and fragrance indoors.

Japanese flowering apricot reaches about 25 feet. Plant habit, size, flower color and fragrance vary depending on the variety. It will flower best in full sun. Soil should be fairly well-drained with a pH between 5.5 and 6.5.

This relatively new plant has not been thoroughly tested for cold hardiness. However, plants at the JC Raulston Arboretum (JCRA) in Raleigh have come through temperatures as low as -7 F with minimal damage, so it should be hardy even in most of the North Carolina mountains. For winter flowers and fragrance it would certainly be worth a try, especially near a patio or entryway.

The JCRA holds one of the most extensive collections of Japanese flowering apricots (*Prunus mume* cultivars) in the eastern U.S. These beautiful trees provide vibrant and welcome color throughout the winter months. Look for newer or distinctive cultivars such as 'Matsurabara Red' with its double pink-red flowers, 'Tojibai' with its white flowers, 'W.B. Clarke' with its weeping form and double pink flowers, and 'Bridal Veil', a weeping tree with white flowers. Visit the JCRA Web site at www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum for future events highlighting these fabulous trees. *Linda Blue*

'Rose Bud'

Todd Lasseigne ©



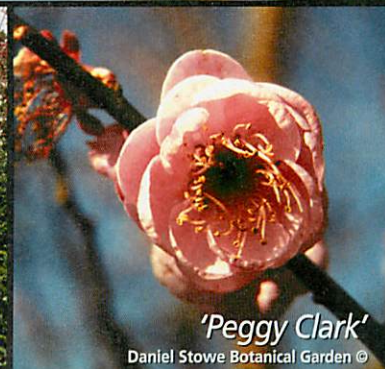
'Matsurabara Red'

Todd Lasseigne ©



'Tojibai'

Todd Lasseigne ©



'Peggy Clark'

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden ©



'Orange Smoothie'



'Tidal Wave Silver'



'Lavender Wave'

Plant a 2002 All-America Selections Winner in Your Garden

These plants win the All-America Selections (AAS) bragging rights by proving they are superior when it comes to traits such as drought and heat tolerance, color retention, length of bloom period and disease and insect resistance.

Bedding and Flowering Plant Winners

Vinca or *Catharanthus roseus* 'Jaio Scarlet Eye' has a distinct rose-scarlet flower color with a small white eye and is the only vinca with this flower color. The two-inch, non-fading blooms cover the one-foot-tall plants that are perfect for gardeners who want season-long color with minimal care.

An unusual bicolor leaf pattern distinguishes 'Black Magic Rose' from all other hybrid geraniums. Each leaf has a black center with a green leaf edge and contrasts with the bright rose florets, each with a small white eye. 'Black Magic Rose' performs best in full sun and is perfect for containers.

The first family-friendly ornamental pepper, 'Chilly Chili', has non-pungent fruit, as the name implies. The heat was bred out of the peppers, making it safe for households with children who like to explore their environment.

'Sparkler Blush' is a hybrid cleome that flowers freely all season. The plants are covered with pink flowers, reaching only 3 feet tall and wide. This smaller size allows gardeners to grow this old-fashioned annual in smaller gardens without overwhelming the design.

Petunia 'Lavender Wave' has a trailing, ground-cover habit and exceptional performance similar

to the famous 'Purple Wave'. Plants are particularly suited for hanging baskets, window boxes and terraced or sloping gardens.

Pansy 'Ultima Morpho' is named after the blue and yellow Morpho butterfly and has a distinct bicolor design. The upper petals are blue with bright lemon yellow lower petals. Recommended for spring or fall gardens, 'Ultima Morpho' flowers all season.

Rudbeckia hirta 'Cherokee Sunset' contains a blend of sunset colors including yellow, orange, bronze and mahogany. The 3- to 4 1/2-inch flowers are double or semi-double and reach about 24 to 30 inches tall, spreading about a foot.

'Tidal Wave Silver' is a petunia sporting distinct silvery white blooms with dark purple centers. 'Tidal Wave Silver' can attain heights of 2 to 3 feet if spaced closely together, about 6 inches, and given support such as a trellis. 'Tidal Wave Silver' is a good container plant.

Vegetable Winners

Cucumber 'Diva' produces a sweet and non-bitter fruit with a crisp texture when harvested at 4 to 5 inches. Normally seedless, unless pollinated by other cuke varieties, 'Diva' produces all female flowers and does not require pollen to set fruit.

Basil 'Magical Michael' is an ornamental, edible sweet basil. 'Magical Michael' plants are uniform and reliably 15 inches tall and 16 to 17 inches wide. The small flowers are a curiosity since the calices are purple and corollas white.

'Sorcerer' is a full-sized pumpkin, weighing 15 to 22 pounds but produced on a compact vine reaching only 10 feet. 'Sorcerer' pumpkins mature in about 100 days from sowing and can be carved, painted or used for pie filling.

Children will be infatuated with 'Orange Smoothie' pumpkins. The size is desirable for young hands, weighing 5 to 8 pounds with a strong, long handle. 'Orange Smoothie' is an all-around great pumpkin for carving, painting, decorating and even the meat is sweet for homemade pumpkin pie.

If you have never eaten a Delicata squash, 'Cornell's Bush Delicata' is the one to grow. The orange flesh, rich in Vitamin A, is very sweet and fine-textured without coarse strings. Allow about 100 days from sowing to harvest. The compact habit requires less garden space.

For more details, visit www.all-americanselections.org. **Royce Hardin**

Pick a Rose

Add one of the 2002 All-America Rose Selections (AARS) to your landscape and you will have a rose that is disease resistant and considered "best of the best." The 2002 AARS selections are 'Love and Peace' and 'Starry Night'.

The 5-inch flowers of 'Love and Peace' are yellow with a pink edge and boast a minimum of 40 petals.

An upright, hybrid tea rose, the blooms are backed by dark green, glossy foliage. 'Love and Peace' grows 4 feet by 3 feet and exhibits a sweet, fruity scent.

Enjoy a 'Starry Night' during the day by incorporating this shrub into your landscape. Pure white blooms stand out against medium green glossy foliage. Two- to three-inch blooms of 5 white petals may remind observers of the dogwood. The plant grows to 3 feet by 3 feet in cool climates and 6 feet by 6 feet in mild to warm areas, making it an ideal plant for large plantings, borders and groundcovers. **Heather Lifsey**



'Starry Night'

Q&A When is the correct day to kill wild onions by mowing them?

I don't believe that particular gardening legend.

During the spring, when this magical day is supposed to occur, the wild onions and wild garlic have already produced little bulbets. These below-ground bulbets won't be affected by mowing, spraying or even yanking the mother plant out of the ground and beating it with a hammer. You must control wild garlic before spring. You can kill wild garlic in the lawn with a pesticide spray containing 2,4-D. Use 2 ounces

of 2,4-D per 1000 square feet in the fall when wild garlic is young and actively growing. It will take two or three years of treatment for the wild garlic to die. This method won't hurt the grass. To treat a few clumps use a 1 percent solution of 2,4-D in December or January. A rate of one tablespoon per clump will kill wild garlic in one year but will also damage grass. Imazaquin (Image) can control wild garlic in some warm-season grasses but would have to be applied by a commercial pesticide applicator.

David Goforth

ENVIRO-TIP

Right Plant, Right Place

"I've grown tired of pruning my crape myrtle every year to keep it away from the eaves of my roof."

"Why is this juniper leaning away from my house?"

"The dogwood out front has been stunted and unhealthy since it was planted eight years ago."

These common landscape complaints may call for a common response: It was the right plant, but planted in the wrong place. Some crape myrtle cultivars will grow to a height of over 20 feet, while others will mature at a height of 3 feet. Junipers generally do best in sunny locations, not in heavy shade. Dogwoods generally grow better as an understory tree protected from harsh direct sunlight. Getting the picture? While every plant situation has exceptions, most species have basic requirements. Consider their needs and plant them in the right place.

Plant hardiness zones are described by USDA according to average minimum temperatures for a given area. Landscape plants are classified according to minimum winter survival temperatures. Most of North Carolina is either in Zone 7 or 8. Portions of some

western counties are in Zone 6. Parts of some eastern counties are in Zone 9. Find out which zone you live in and which zones your plants are adapted to.

Mature plant size may be the most overlooked consideration. Find out how tall and how wide a plant will be when it is full-grown. Knowing this will prevent future maintenance problems near buildings, under utility lines and at entrances.

Form, texture and color are important. Contrasting these attributes among your plantings provides accent. Without accent a design may be dull or uninteresting.

For plants to thrive and prosper, consider their sun or shade requirements. Some ornamentals thrive in well-drained soils while others prefer moist, heavy soils.

Selecting the right plant for the right place means doing your homework before purchasing plants. If you buy a beautiful plant on an impulse, remember to get to know that plant before deciding where it will spend its life. To learn more, contact your county Cooperative Extension Center or go online at www.ncstate-plants.net for reliable plant facts. *Mike Wilder*



Robert E. Lyons ©



Announcing Extension's



► Saturday, February 9

- 9 a.m. to Noon
- Wilson Agricultural Center
- Details: (252) 237-0113

► Saturday, February 16

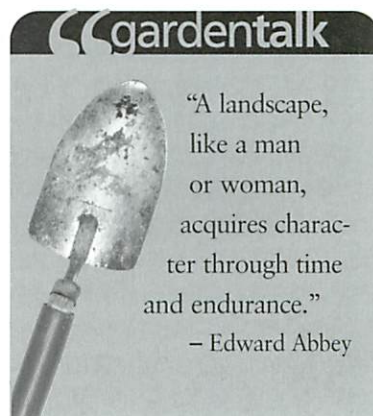
- 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Citizens Resource Center, Dallas
- Speakers: Bob Polomski, Deward Clark, Kevin Starr, Chris Moorman, Ron Ballard
- Fee: \$4 advance, \$6 at door
- Details: (704) 922-2110

► Sunday, February 24

- 1 to 5 p.m.
- Southern Spring Show, Charlotte Merchandise Mart
- Fee: Show admission
- Details: (704) 336-2561

► Saturday, March 9

- 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (every other hour on Home Improvement Stage)
- Southern Ideal Home Show, Greensboro Coliseum
- Fee: Show admission
- Details: (704) 375-5876





Garden Spot

The Southern Spring Show, the

Southeast's largest gardening and horticulture exposition, explodes on the scene in Charlotte every year, just when we all need a touch of spring. This year's show begins on Feb. 23 and runs through March 3. Where else can you walk through dazzling display gardens, get landscape and interior design ideas and free gardening advice in one place?

Plan on stopping by the Horticulture Information Center where Extension's *Successful Gardener* will be featured and where Extension horticulture agents and Master Gardeners will be available to answer your gardening questions.

The show is at the Charlotte Merchandise Mart, 2500 E. Independence Blvd. (Hwy 74). Show hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., except Sundays and Mondays, when the show opens at 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is \$9 for adults, free for children 12 and under. Call (800) 849-0248 or visit www.southernspringshow.com.

Ben Dungan

Gardening in January & February

Lawns

- Control winter weeds such as wild garlic and chickweed with a lawn formula broadleaf herbicide. Spray on a warm day. Results are slow in winter.
- Apply preemergent weed control in late February or when the forsythia bloom.

Ornamentals

- Divide perennials like daylily, shasta daisy and peony when the ground is dry enough to work.
- Prune broadleaf evergreen shrubs such as holly and boxwood.
- Check mulch around plants. Be sure it is not crowding the trunk.

- Rake and discard the fallen leaves around roses to reduce disease problems.

- Begin pruning roses in early to mid-February at the Coast; late February or early March in the Piedmont and the Mountains.

- Check established evergreens for signs of scale.
 - Make dormant cuttings of deciduous shrubs such as hydrangea and viburnum; root in perlite.

Edibles

- Start broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower plants inside your home the first week of February.

- Plant asparagus crowns and early vegetables such as English peas, onions, Irish potatoes, lettuces, radishes, spinach, turnips and carrots.

- After pruning fruit trees, spray with a dormant oil to help eliminate some insect pests. Spray when temperature is above 45 degrees and will remain above freezing for 24 hours. *Karen Neill*



Extension's *Successful Gardener*™ program provides timely, research-based horticultural information. The newsletter is part of the statewide horticulture program which includes Extension's *Successful Gardener*™ Regional Seminar Series and county workshops. We publish 10 issues per year. Comments concerning *Successful Gardener*™ may be sent to:

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Ask for Extension's *Successful Gardener*™ newsletter at one of your local garden centers each month!

For a list of garden centers where you can find *Successful Gardener*™, please call (704)336-2561 or visit Cooperative Extension on the web at <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu>

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Tune in to "Making It Grow!" – a gardening show featuring Extension agents from the Carolinas. Saturdays, noon, WTVI 42, Charlotte

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