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THE LAST WEEK IN APRIL finds the pageant of spring well under way at the Arnold Arboretum. From the rising ground at the edge of the maple collection the view across the meadow to the Administration Building forms a picture in soft pastels. At the right are the yellow greens of the willows and the blood reds of the swamp maples; at the left are the Katsura trees (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) whose fan-shaped branches, lined with leaves and tiny opening flowers, are a haze of bronze red until the late afternoon sun lights them from the side and they glow with a deeper color. Forming a focal point in the center of the picture are the blossoms of the earliest Chinese magnolias, a striking chalk white as seen from the distance. *Magnolia stellata* has as usual been the earliest to flower and this year its starry, narrow-petaled flowers have not as yet been sullied by late frosts or heavy rains. Near the road *Magnolia stellata* var. *rosea* is showing bright pink though not yet really in bloom. The creamy white flowers of *Magnolia denudata* (the *Magnolia conspicua* or *Magnolia Yulan* of most nursery catalogues) are already spreading their delicious fragrance. The large velvety buds of the hybrids known as  $\times$  *Magnolia Soulangeana* are beginning to open and will soon add color to the collection. On the hill behind the building is the hardiest of all the oriental magnolias, *M. kobus* var. *borealis*. It has not yet reached the age where it may be relied upon for a fine show of bloom every year for this variety unfortunately does not blossom well until it is mature and this year there are only a few flowers scattered among the lower branches.

*Magnolia kobus*, *M. stellata* and *M. denudata* are all early-flowering and are all white-flowered or nearly so. Those who have trouble in distinguishing the three will find that it can be done quite simply by examining the flowers. *Magnolia kobus* has six petals and outside them three tiny sepals of greenish white. In *Magnolia denudata* the three



sepals are so large as barely to be distinguished from the petals so that the flowers appear to have nine petals which are creamy greenish white, gracefully cupped in an upright position. In *Magnolia stellata* the sepals are also petal-like and since there are more petals in this species the flower has the appearance of having a dozen or more petals set in an open sunburst of pinkish white.

Although there were no really conspicuous floral displays until the Magnolias broke into flower there has been continuous bloom all the month in spite of a somewhat tardy spring. *Hammamelis vernalis* carried its fragrant flowers well into April this year although even in New England it is properly to be reckoned as a winter-flowering shrub. Gardeners planning to use this species would do well to plant it, if possible, well to the south of the point from which it will ordinarily be viewed. Placed in this way it will catch the level rays of the winter sun and if the color is even then not really brilliant, it will at least be a good deal brighter than when seen from the other direction.

While it does not flower until later, *Ribes cereum* comes into leaf so early and so attractively that it is of distinct interest in the early spring garden. This year as usual it was the first plant in the shrub collection to put out its new leaves and by the first week in April its fragrant foliage was already attractive. It is unfortunate that quarantine regulations prevent this interesting western American shrub from being more widely known and grown.

Early April also saw the first spring blooms on *Viburnum fragrans*. This surprising shrub opened a few flowers in last autumn's long Indian Summer and it was feared that the buds were so far advanced that they would be hopelessly damaged during the winter. Some of them evidently were killed but there has been a continuous glow of pink and white among the bare branches during the month and they are now conspicuously in flower and delightfully fragrant.

It is in tardy springs that the Cornelian Cherry (*Cornus mas*) shows its worth as a spring shrub. Although not quite so conspicuous as the more commonly used Forsythia it is regularly and dependably a little earlier to bloom. This year with no early burst of spring heat, it has been a good fortnight ahead of its rival and is now in full bloom. Its small yellow flowers are borne in conspicuous clusters and are particularly effective when used as decorative sprays for the hall or living room. The closely related oriental species, *Cornus officinalis*, has been very much used for this purpose in Japan as any collection of pictures of Japanese flower arrangements will show. This latter species, differing chiefly in its longer-stalked flowers and its flakier bark, is also in



full flower. It will be of interest to the horticultural connoisseur and to the botanist, but for the average gardener it is if anything inferior to *Cornus mas*. When in flower both of these shrubs have a slightly offensive odor, something like that of a wet dog. Fortunately it is not so strong as to be objectionable, since in addition to earliness and hardiness, *Cornus mas* has several qualities which recommend its more frequent use in American gardens. For one thing it is very tolerant of smoke and has done surprisingly well in the smokier parts of some of our large cities. Furthermore although seldom used in this country (except by the birds), the fruit of *Cornus mas* has distinct possibilities. Late in the summer it bears glossy red-purple drupes and in south-eastern Europe where the shrub is native they are much esteemed for the making of preserves. In Bulgaria large fruited varieties have been developed and are to be found in the markets in August and September. Seeds of several of these strains were obtained last Autumn for the Arnold Arboretum and may some day be of interest to discerning American gardeners.

*Forsythia ovata*, the Korean Forsythia, is giving a good account of itself this year as last. It is already in full bloom as is its close relative, *Forsythia japonica saxatilis*. Both of these northern Forsythias are hardier, earlier, though smaller-flowered than the Forsythias commonly grown in New England.

Although it is a fine shrub a little further south, *Lonicera fragrantissima* can not be unqualifiedly recommended for New England gardens. It was killed back practically to the ground last year and this spring it is flowering only on those branches which were protected beneath the snow during the winter. Two of its lesser known relatives, however, are giving much better accounts of themselves. *Lonicera Standishii* is in flower on the Overlook. While not as handsome either in habit or in flower as *Lonicera fragrantissima*, its behavior last spring and this have demonstrated its greater sturdiness in cold winters. A much rarer honeysuckle, the Korean *Lonicera praefflorens*, flowered profusely this spring in the shrub collection, by no means the choicest spot in the Arnold Arboretum for an early-flowering shrub. By the second week in April it was covered with bloom and although its spidery blossoms were browned once or twice by late frosts it was most attractive. The flowers are fragrant and of a pale greenish yellow tinged with red-purple.

An even rarer shrub, *Abeliophyllum distichum*, is now in full flower in the same section of the shrub collection. Another specimen trained as a vine on the nearby trellis has blossomed in previous springs, but



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