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Bush Honeysuckles. The name Honeysuckle is a term popularly applied to various plants of different genera, not only in this part of the globe but also in other countries where the English language prevails. Locally, in New England, it is often given to the flowers of indigenous Azaleas, and the Trumpet Creeper, (*Tecoma radicans*) imported into our gardens from further south, is not infrequently known as a Honeysuckle or Trumpet Honeysuckle. Generally, however, in this part of America, the term Honeysuckle is understood to refer to the various species of the genus *Lonicera*, a group of such wide dissimilarity in aspect that it has been proposed by some botanists to divide it into several genera. But certain aspects of foliage and structure of flowers and fruits, common to all, serve to bind them together into a recognized typical group.

Originally named by Linnaeus for Adam Lonicer or Lonitzer, a German botanist and physician who died in 1586, the genus is now recognized as containing between 175 and 200 species, all natives of the northern hemisphere and, as yet, unknown from south of the equator. Of the many species that have been recognized and described only a small proportion are regarded as hardy or adapted to cold northern conditions. Some of the more common of these hardy species have, when brought together, produced some interesting hybrids, developed through natural processes or aided by the hand of man. Altogether the Honeysuckles may be ranked as of the first order of usefulness in the work of the horticulturist or landscape gardener.

There are two Chinese Bush Honeysuckles which have been long introduced into our parks and gardens and are among the earliest in spring to produce flowers. These are *Lonicera fragrantissima* and *L. Standishii*, half-evergreen or late deciduous shrubs which attain six to eight feet in height and a greater spread of branches. To the casual observer they may appear to be uninteresting plants as they do not offer any conspicuous features either in flower or fruit. But a close acquaintance with them, at their best season, will show small white or yellow-

ish-white flowers which give off a very strong, sweet fragrance, like *Epigaea* or Mayflower, which is discernible some distance away when the flowers are plentiful. Sometimes flowers are produced in the late autumn and they may reappear occasionally during very mild times in winter. In this climate the normal flowering period is April, blossoms continuing to appear through May or until or after, the red fruits are ripe, about the first of June. They may, however, continue to ripen for several weeks. At the present time, June 5, in the Arboretum, scattered flowers may still be found, together with ripe fruit. This fruit is red, thin skinned, pulpy, sweetish, several seeded, oblong or oval in shape and sometimes about half an inch long. The flower buds are sometimes destroyed in very severe winters and even the plants may lose some of the upper parts of their branches. Without protection they might be considered too uncertain in hardiness for regions north of the Peach zone.

In habit the plants are somewhat similar, becoming broad-spreading bushes 7 to 8 feet high and with an equal or greater diameter. *Lonicera Standishii* is considered somewhat hardier than *L. fragrantissima*, although both may appear to thrive equally well under good drainage conditions. These species have long been in cultivation in this country, especially in some of our parks. They might not profitably be accorded a place in very small gardens, where the limited space is wanted for more showy things, but they certainly would give an added interest to larger plantations.

Most of the Honeysuckles have what may be called unpalatable fruits, but there is an exception in *Lonicera villosa*, a low growing shrub, native of the cold northern parts of northeastern North America, and found southward, in cold environments, to Pennsylvania. This species bears fruits covered with a dense blue bloom, ripening in the Boston region at the end of May or in June and bearing a strong resemblance to medium sized fruits of some of our native Blueberries (*Vaccinium*). This fruit is classed as edible, has a rather pleasant flavor, and has been known to be gathered and sold as Blueberries. The flowers are greenish-white, much hidden by the leaves. Although an interesting native the species is of no particular interest for the average garden, where showiness is the prevailing desire.

The old established Tatarian Honeysuckle, (*Lonicera tatarica*), is a close competitor of the common Lilac for public recognition in old gardens. The latter has the advantage of having had a longer introduction to cultivation, being recognized as having been domesticated as early as 1597, while the Tatarian Honeysuckle is recorded as having been brought into gardens in 1752, or over 150 years later, from its native home in Turkestan and southern Russia. It is a plant which shows a greater variation than the common Lilac, when raised from seed, and at the Arnold Arboretum there are probably as many inquiries about this variable and cosmopolitan species as about any in common cultivation. The small globose berries are normally bright red, occasionally translucent yellow, and are freely eaten by some of the birds, which eject the hard, horny seeds after the pulp has been absorbed or digested. In this way the Tatarian Honeysuckle has become naturalized and may



LONICERA AMOENA ARNOLDIANA

Photographed in the Arnold Arboretum, June 2, 1931,
by Herbert W. Gleason



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