October 25, 1954

exception of a few precocious flowers on a branch of one of the plants of *H. vernalis* which opened late in December, none of these plants were in flower this year until the middle of March. In the size of the flowers and in the length and brilliancy of the bright yellow petals *Hamamelis mollis*, a native of western China, is the handsomest of all the Witch Hazels. The pale green foliage of this shapely shrub is also attractive. It is very hardy and grows rapidly, and might well find a place in any garden or city plot in public view during the winter months. This Witch Hazel is one of the most valuable and interesting shrubs brought in recent years to the United States.

Prunus Davidiana. This is the earliest of the Plum, Cherry, Peach and Apricot groups to flower this year. It is one of the wild Peaches of northern China, and is a small tree with lustrous red-brown bark, slender erect branches which form a narrow head, small flowers, narrow pointed leaves and small fruit of no edible value. The flowers are usually of the color of those of the common Peach-tree, and there is a form with pure white flowers. The two forms have been covered with flowers during the past week in the Peach and Apricot Group on the right-hand side of the Meadow Road before its junction with the Forest Hills and Bussey Hill Roads. As a flowering tree in this climate this Peach has little to recommend it for the flower-buds or the flowers are killed almost every year by late frosts, but just now pomologists in this country are interested in it as a possible stock on which to work the common Peach-tree, as it is hardy north of the region where the Peach thrives.

Early Rhododendrons. Several plants of the Siberian and north China *Rhododendron dahuricum* have been in bloom on the upper side of Azalea Path during the past week. This shrub has been in European gardens for more than a century but is still little known in the United States. It has small dark green leaves which in this climate remain on the branches until late in the winter, and small bright rose-colored flowers. These are often destroyed by spring frosts, and this plant has never been so beautiful before in the Arboretum as it is this spring. There is a variety *sempervirens* with more persistent leaves and darker-colored flowers. This variety is not blooming this year. Usually *Rhododendron mucronulatum* is the earliest of the Rhododendrons to bloom in the Arboretum but this year it is a week later than *R. dahuricum*, and is only now opening its paler rose-colored flowers. This is a tall, perfectly hardy, deciduous-leaved shrub which has flowered freely every spring in the Arboretum for the last twenty years and is chiefly valuable for the earliness of the flowers which appear on the leafless branches and are rarely injured by spring frosts. In the Arboretum the leaves turn bright yellow before falling late in the autumn. There is a large group of these plants on the lower side of Azalea Path.

Early Magnolias. The flower-buds of the Japanese *Magnolia stellata* have been nearly all killed in the Arboretum. This should not, how-

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ever, discredit this beautiful shrub, for the plants here are in low ground and in a particularly trying position, and in other Massachusetts gardens plants of this *Magnolia* have not been injured and are now in full bloom. The flower-buds of the other early-flowering Japanese species, *Magnolia kobus* and its variety *borealis*, have not been injured and are now just opening. As flowering plants they are the least desirable here of the *Magnolias* which bloom before the leaves appear, for the flowers are not large and only exceptionally are produced in large numbers.

Daphne Mezereum. A plant of the white-flowered form of this small European shrub has been in bloom on Azalea Path for the last two weeks. The purple and the white-flowered forms are useful garden plants because they are almost the first shrubs to open their flowers in this climate and because the flowers are not injured by spring frosts. This *Daphne* is interesting to us in this country because it is one of the few shrubs native of Europe which have become widely naturalized in some parts of North America, as in eastern Massachusetts and on the Canadian side of the Niagara River above the Falls.

The Cornelian Cherry, which is a Dogwood (*Cornus mas*), is one of the earliest trees or tree-like shrubs with conspicuous flowers to bloom in eastern Massachusetts. The flowers are light yellow and are borne in clusters in the axils of the unfolding leaves and, although individually small, are produced in such profusion that the branches are covered with them. The flowers are followed by bright red, lustrous, oblong fruits the size of small olives. The flower-buds and the flowers of this tree are not injured by cold. The habit of the plant is good; the foliage is dark green and abundant, and the fruit, although somewhat hidden by the leaves, is handsome. The Cornelian Cherry, which is a native of Europe and western Siberia, has been an inhabitant of gardens for more than three hundred years. In the United States it was probably more often planted in the first half of the last century than it is at present, although there are not many early-flowering trees hardy in this climate which are better worth a place in the garden. The largest specimen we know in eastern Massachusetts is in the Public Garden of Boston, near Boylston Street. In the Arboretum it may be seen with the other Dogwoods at the junction of the Meadow and Bussey Hill Roads.

Early-flowering native shrubs. Two yellow-flowered native shrubs are in flower and are well worth the attention of the makers of American gardens by whom they have been generally neglected. These are the Leatherwood, *Dirca palustris*, and the aromatic Spice Bush, *Benzoin aestivale*. Their leafless branches are now covered with small yellow flowers, and those of the Spice Bush will be followed in the autumn by scarlet lustrous fruits. The leaves of these plants turn yellow in the autumn before falling. Masses of these shrubs can be seen on the right-hand side of the Bussey Hill Road opposite the upper end of the Lilac Collection.

1917. "Early Magnolias." *Bulletin of popular information - Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University* 3(1), 2-3. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.320636>.

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