ARNOLD ARBORETUM

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The exceptionally cold and sunless weather of the last week of April and of the early days of May has greatly retarded the advance of vegetation, and very few plants are in bloom in the Arboretum; and on the 3d of May leaf-buds were still generally closed. An exception, however, is found in

Prinsepia sinensis. The leaves of this Chinese shrub, which are among the first in the Arboretum to unfold, are already nearly fully grown and the flowers are opening; these are bright yellow, about two-thirds of an inch in diameter, and appear in few-flowered clusters in the axils of the leaves. This *Prinsepia* is a tall, vigorous, perfectly hardy shrub, with ascending and spreading spiny branches, and is perfectly at home in eastern Massachusetts. It will probably prove here to be an excellent and very ornamental hedge plant. Unfortunately, the red berry-like fruit is rarely produced here, so that this plant can be increased only by cuttings. The largest plant in the Arboretum is on the upper side of Hickory Path near Centre Street; a plant is also in the Shrub Collection. Another species, *Prinsepia uniflora*, a native also of northern China, is established in the Arboretum; it is a more spiny shrub with small white flowers, and as an ornamental plant has little to recommend it.

Corylopsis. A year ago attention was called in one of these Bulletins to the flowering of some of these plants in the collection of Chinese shrubs on the southern slope of Bussey Hill. The flower-buds are often injured in this climate by spring frosts but last spring they es-

caped and now these plants are again covered with flowers. *Corylopsis* is a genus of the Witch Hazel Family and is confined to the Himalayas and to China and Japan. They are shrubs with leaves which generally resemble those of the Witch Hazel and drooping spikes of fragrant clear yellow flowers. Two species discovered by Wilson in western China, *Corylopsis Veitchiana* and *C. Willmottae*, are now in bloom on Bussey Hill, and on the lower side of Hickory Path near Centre Street there is a plant of the rare Japanese *C. Gotoana* also in flower. This plant, which is not rare in central Japan, appears to be little known in gardens. The Arboretum specimen was raised here from seed collected in Japan in 1905 by Mr. Jack, and has now flowered here for several years. The flower-buds seem less liable to injury by spring frosts than those of some of the other species, and it is probable that when this beautiful shrub is better known it will become popular for the decoration of the spring garden. The flowers are of a delicate canary-yellow color and paler than those of the other species.

Rhododendron praecox, "Little Gem." This is the first of the ever-green Rhododendrons to bloom; it is a variety of *R. praecox* which is a hybrid between the Himalayan *R. ciliatum* and the Siberian *R. dahuricum* mentioned in the last issue of these Bulletins. *R. praecox* is a shrub two or three feet high with thick oval leaves bright green on the upper surface and rusty below, and few-flowered clusters of pale purple or lilac flowers which in the variety Little Gem are somewhat larger and paler in color. This variety is a handsome plant and would be a desirable ornament for the spring garden were not the flowers too often destroyed by spring frosts. This spring, as they were last year, the plants are beautifully in flower and can be seen in the Rhododendron Collection at the base of Hemlock Hill.

Prunus mandshurica. This is a hardy Apricot tree which grows vigorously in the Arboretum, and can now be seen in flower in the Peach and Apricot Group on the slope above the Meadow Road beyond the piece of natural woods. By some authors this tree is considered a variety of the common Apricot (*P. Armeniaca*) but it is very distinct from that tree in the pale bark on the stem and branches and in the shape of the leaves. The flowers which have a deep red calyx and petals faintly tinged with rose are nearly an inch across and are just now conspicuous on the leafless branches. The fruit is nearly globular, not more than an inch in diameter, yellow spotted with red, with sweet succulent flesh; it is inferior to that of cultivated forms of the common Apricot, but as *P. mandshurica* is very hardy varieties may perhaps be developed with the fruit as good as that of the best cultivated Apricots, and hardy where that tree cannot be cultivated. This Apricot as it now grows in the Arboretum is an important addition to the group of hardy ornamental early-flowering trees.

Prunus dehiscens. This little almond is now in flower in the collection of Chinese shrubs on the southern slope of Bussey Hill. It is a small, spiny, intricately branched shrub with small pale pink flowers

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