589.173
H32
COMPLIMENTARY

NEW SERIES VOL. V

NO. 1

ARNOLD ARBORETUM

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

BULLETIN

OF

POPULAR INFORMATION

JAMAICA PLAIN, MASS.

MAY 1, 1919

The winter of 1918-19 was as exceptional in its mildness as the previous winter was exceptional in its severity. The thermometer only once registered zero at the Arboretum, and although little snow fell the ground was at no time frozen to any great depth. No injury has apparently been done by the winter to any plant in the Arboretum, but it is interesting to note that the leaves of the eastern American Yew (*Taxus canadensis*) growing in a position fully exposed to the sun are browner this spring than they were a year ago. The mild winter had, too, a curious effect on the winter flowering Witch Hazels. The American species (*Hamamelis vernalis*) flowered as usual at the end of December and in early January, but the Japanese and Chinese species did not open their flower buds until the end of February or a month or six weeks later than in previous years. The Chinese Witch Hazel (*H. mollis*) has not before been so covered with flowers; and as the plants grow larger the value of this beautiful shrub for the decoration of the winter garden is more clearly shown. The flowers of no other Witch Hazel are so large and beautiful, and the handsome leaves turn to brilliant shades of yellow and orange before falling in November. This plant is still rare in American gardens and probably is not to be found in American nurseries. Seeds have not yet been produced in the Arboretum, and it is only by grafting it on the American species that the Chinese plant can be now increased.

In spite of the mild weather in February and March vegetation in the Arboretum was not unusually advanced on the first of April. The Leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*) opened its flowers on the 6th of April,

or only a day earlier than last year, and other April flowering shrubs have blossomed at their normal time. On April 2nd the temperature fell to 23° Fahrenheit. This ruined the flowers of the north China Peach (*Prunus Davidiana*) which were just opening and those of the earliest of the Azaleas (*Rhododendron dahuricum*) whose rose-colored corollas were just emerging from the buds. On the nights of the 24th and the 25th the thermometer registered as low as 24°. This ruined the flowers of the early blooming Magnolias, but the flowers of the Forsythias, Cherries, Plums and Apricots show no signs of injury. Freezing weather in April is not unusual in New England and its effect on the flowers of different plants can well be studied by persons who have in mind the planting of spring gardens. The flowers of *Magnolia stellata*, *M. denudata* (better known as *M. conspicua*), *M. kobus* and its variety *borealis*, which open in April, are too often ruined by frost. To prevent this it is desirable to plant these trees and shrubs on the north side of other trees, and especially of evergreen trees, where the flowers may be expected to open seven or eight days later than on plants fully exposed to the sun. The hybrid Chinese Magnolias with pink or rose-colored flowers all bloom later than the white-flowered species and their flowers are rarely injured by cold although the unfolding petals of some of these hybrids were badly discolored by the cold of the past week. These hybrids therefore, although their flowers are less beautiful than those of the species, are better garden plants in this climate. The best known of these hybrids is called *M. Soulangeana*, of which there are several varieties differing in the greater or less amount of pink or rose color in the petals. The flowers of *Rhododendron dahuricum*, as has already been stated, were spoiled this spring but last year were uninjured. Its variety with persistent leaves (var. *sempervirens*) bloomed a few days later and escaped injury. A few days later the flowers of the north China and Korean *Rhododendron mucronulatum* opened, and although now beginning to fade were in good condition during fully two weeks. A more southern plant and therefore inclined to bloom later than *R. dahuricum*, it is a better garden plant in this climate and one of the handsomest mid-April flowering shrubs in the Arboretum. The Cornelian Cherry (*Cornus Mas*) is another plant for which the frosts of April have no terrors. The small, bright yellow flowers arranged in many-flowered clusters open late in March or in early April and remain in good condition for three or four weeks. There is no record here of their injury by frost. This is a shapely shrub or small tree of excellent habit; the leaves are bright green and the scarlet or rarely yellow fruit, which ripens late in summer, is cherry-like in appearance. The Cornelian Cherry is a native of eastern Europe and western Asia, and has been grown in Old World gardens for three centuries. There is no better early flowering shrub for our northern gardens in which, although it was brought to America certainly more than a hundred years ago, it is still too little seen.

Forsythias, after having lost a part of their flower-buds in three of the past five winters, are again covered with flowers which have not

1919. "[Introduction]." *Bulletin of popular information - Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University* 5(1), 1-2. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.320891>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/239291>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.320891>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/320891>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Not in copyright. The BHL knows of no copyright restrictions on this item.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.