ARNOLD ARBORETUM

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An early spring. An unusually mild winter during which a temperature of zero was recorded only twice at the Arboretum, followed by a March with a temperature of 80° on two days, and an unprecedented high average for the month, has caused many plants to flower earlier than they have flowered here before. On March 21 *Cornus mas*, *Dirca palustris*, *Prunus Davidiana* and *Acer rubrum* were in full flower. *Rhododendron dahuricum* and *R. mucronulatum* were opening their first buds, and on March 26 the first flowers on several of the Forsythias and on *Magnolia stellata* had opened, several Currants and Gooseberries were in bloom, and *Corylopsis Gotoana* was opening its innumerable flower-buds. The Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*) had flowered on the 9th of March, only eight days earlier than in 1920, although in the severe winter of 1918-19 it was in bloom in the Arboretum on the 28th of February. In earlier years *Cornus mas* has flowered usually as early as April 3 and as late as April 25. In the six years from 1914-1920 *Dirca palustris* which, with the exception of two or three Willows, is the first North American shrub to bloom in the Arboretum, began to flower as early as April 3 and as late as April 15.

The fact that the winter flowering Witch Hazels bloom later in mild winters than they do in exceptionally cold winters is not easy to explain. In the cold winter of 1915-16, and 1918-19, *Hamamelis mollis* was in full flower on January 26 and February 9. In 1916 *Hamamelis japonica* was in flower on January 26 and in 1919 the flowers were fully open during the first week in February. This year the flowers on these two plants did not open until the first week of March. On

October 25, 1954
March 28 the thermometer fell from 78° at noon to 18° during the following night, and many flowers were injured or destroyed.

This unusual spring has made it possible to obtain some useful conclusions on the value in this climate of some of the early-flowering trees and shrubs. It has again shown that the flowers most easily injured by spring frosts are those of the Magnolias, and especially of *Magnolia stellata*, and of the earliest flowering Rhododendrons. This year only a few of the Magnolia buds had opened and the plants on the 6th of April are well covered with flowers which, although perhaps rather smaller than usual, are not discolored. Every flower and flower-bud on every plant of *Rhododendron dahuricum* has been killed, and the first flowers of *R. mucronulatum* are ruined. The flowers of *Dirca palustris* have been injured and those of *Corylopsis Gotoana* have been killed. Not more than one per cent. of the flowers of the Asiatic Forsythias and their hybrids have been injured, and the damage is so small that the general appearance of the plants is not affected by it. On the European species a larger percentage of buds has been injured. The flowers of *Cornus mas*, the Cornelian Cherry, were not injured by the sudden change of temperature and the trees in the Arboretum have not before been more thickly covered with their clusters of bright yellow flowers. The fact that severe spring frosts do not injure the flowers of this Cornel greatly adds to its value for the decoration of parks and gardens in regions with an uncertain spring climate.

The Cornelian Cherry is a native of southern Europe, and western Asia and Siberia, and is a large, shapely shrub ten or twelve feet high and broad, or if pruned when young to a single stem a tree with a short trunk and wide-spreading branches. The flowers are pale yellow, and are borne in compact clusters in the axils of the unfolding leaves, and although individually small are produced in such profusion that they cover the branches. The leaves, which are large and dark green, are handsome but fall in the autumn, like those of many other European trees and shrubs, without change of color. The fruit is of the shape and size of a small olive, and is bright scarlet and lustrous. Plants said to be of a yellow-fruited form have been planted several times in the Arboretum but the fruit has always been scarlet. The flesh of the fruit is sweet, of a rather agreeable flavor, and in Europe is sometimes made into a preserve. For regions too cold for the successful cultivation of the Forsythias the Cornelian Cherry is the handsomest of early flowering shrubs with yellow flowers. In its native countries it often grows in calcareous soil and should, therefore, prove valuable in the middle western states. A hundred years ago when the number of handsome plants available for American gardens was not as large as it is today the Cornelian Cherry was more often planted here than it is now, and it is doubtful if it can now be found in many American nurseries. Few exotic shrubs, nevertheless, are better worth the attention of northern nurserymen.

Forsythias. In spite of the loss of a few of their expanding flower-buds the Asiatic Forsythias have not often been in better bloom in the Arboretum, for the cold of severe winters like those of 1915 and 1916 too often kills the flower-buds. None of the newly discovered Asiatic

Gift

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