

norfolk botanical garden

HORTICULTURE HIGHLIGHTS

Horticultural Highlights – Late June/Early July 2022

Hydrangeas – Kaufman Hydrangea Garden

June to early July is peak bloom here for most Hydrangea species, and our Kaufman Hydrangea Garden has many different varieties. Right now, the big leaf hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) are the showiest and the most colorful.

Roses – Bicentennial Rose Garden

While May to mid-June was peak bloom time in our rose garden, there is still a remarkable amount of color and fragrance.

Swamp Rose – Causeway, Lake Whitehurst

Not only does NBG have thousands of cultivated roses, it also has one of only a few roses native to Virginia. The swamp rose (*Rosa palustris*) gets its name because it likes naturally occurring wet soils, normally certain death most other roses.

Crapemyrtles – Garden-wide

Norfolk Botanical Garden has the only recognized collection of crapemyrtles (*Lagerstroemia* species and hybrids) in North America, and likely the world. Our climate is extremely well adapted to their growth, closely mimicking the climate of their native Asia. They have been an important part of our collection since Fred Huetten first encouraged area gardeners to plant them last century. Today they are the official tree of the city of Norfolk, and comprise over half of all street trees on city property. Their peak season of bloom is typically early July, but some varieties begin in June.

Pomegranate – Japanese Garden, Sensory Garden

Even if pomegranates (*Punica granatum*) never provided deliciously tart fruit, high in anti-oxidants, it would be worth growing for its orangiest of orange flowers. So rich and bright that sun glasses are recommended.

Daylilies – Baker Perennial Garden

Daylilies (*Hemerocallis* species and hybrids) are one of the easiest, most satisfying, and most colorful perennials. Our large collection in the Baker Perennial Garden would not be possible without the support we have received from the Tidewater Daylily Society.

Hops – Grain and Hops Garden

Beer wouldn't be beer without the distinct flavor of hops (*Humulus lupulus*). Our plants are currently fully budded and growing on teepee-like structures. Later they will be harvested and a local brewer will craft a beer from them.

Hostas – Statuary Vista, Admin Welcome Garden, Garden-wide

This familiar garden perennial prefers shady locations, especially in Southern climates. Grown primarily for their diverse foliage textures and colors, there are several thousand different varieties to

choose from. While NBG does not have quite that many, it does have enough to qualify as designated hosta garden, so says the American Hosta Society.

Pitcher Plants – Va. Native Plant Garden, WOW

Looking as if they are from another planet, these carnivorous plants (*Sarracenia* species and hybrids) have a sinister architecture. Insects looking for an easy meal are lured into the pitcher-like structure of the plant. Once inside they find the sides are lined with downward facing hairs that make it nearly impossible for the insects to leave the plant. Eventually they fall into a pool of digestive juices at the bottom of tube where the plant will make a meal of them.

Southern Magnolia – Flowering Arboretum

This is one of the classic trees (*Magnolia grandiflora*) of Southern gardens. Large white flowers are open right now, and they have an intoxicating fragrance. Evergreen, native, wind-resistant, they are easy to grow in full sun to partial shade. However, they can be very messy. Even though they are evergreen, the leaves will drop, just not all at once, and they take a very long time to decompose. If the branches are allowed to remain low to the ground this will hide many of those fallen leaves.

Bonsai Collection – Transition Garden

NBG is somewhat unique that our collection is managed by a group of dedicated and passionate bonsai volunteers. Over the past few years they have been able to substantially grow our collection and it now includes some amazing pieces, many of which were created from ordinary garden plants growing in our gardens or nursery.

Button Bush – Frog Bog, Lake Whitehurst

This native wetland plant (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) can be found growing in most of the state along shorelines, streambanks, and in freshwater wetlands. Its most distinctive feature is its ivory-white flowers, looking like so many little Sputnik satellites.

Chinese Evergreen Dogwood – Kaufman Hydrangea Garden

Most people are familiar with our native flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), the state flower of Virginia, which has a reputation for being finicky to grow. However, the Chinese evergreen dogwood (*Cornus elliptica*) is easy to grow, as long as it is given some shade. The flowers bloom weeks after our native, it keeps its leaves year-round, and it produces handsome red fruit later in the summer.

Sacred Lotus – Japanese Garden

There are few flowers more attractive and eye-catching than that of sacred lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*). The fragrant blossoms are shades of a delicate pink, surrounding a central pod. This edible and medicinal wetland plant is revered in Asian cultures for its ability to cleanly rise above the muck and mud with such beauty. You can enjoy these flowers up close and personal from the stone footbridge in our Japanese Garden.

Wildlife Watch – NBG is home to a number of animals that have learned that humans often have food. Please remember that the best things for our crows, turtles, fish, geese, foxes, squirrels, and other clever animals to eat is what they find in nature, and not your leftover sandwich or potato chips.

Les Parks, Director of Horticulture