Roses – Bicentennial Rose Garden
NBG has one of the largest rose gardens on the East Coast. Although they will bloom from mid-spring until the first good freeze, their peak bloom is typically around Mother’s Day, and again in October when the weather cools.

Oleander – Subtropical Garden, WOW, and other places
Oleander (Nerium oleander) is native to North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean where it thrives in that hot, dry climate. Coastal Virginia is just warm enough in the winter to allow this evergreen to grow, but even then, a very cold winter can knock it to the ground. In early summer it is covered with pink, red, white, or even pale yellow blooms. Not only can it take heat and drought, but it is very tolerant of salt spray and sandy soil, so it is perfect for beach landscapes. Just beware, it is very toxic if eaten making it also one of the most deer-proof plants!

Hydrangeas – Kaufman Hydrangea Garden
June 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.

Papyrus – Renaissance Court
Growing in pots in the fountain at Renaissance Court this summer is papyrus (Cyperus papyrus), one of the most important plants to ancient Egyptian culture. Not only was it used to make one of the earliest forms of paper, but it was also cultivated for food, medicine, and boats were made with bundles of its stems.

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.

Crinum Lily – Baker Perennial Garden, Boat Basin, Conifer Garden
Crinums (Crinum species and hybrids) are native around the world in tropical areas. Over the years they have been bred and hybridized for increased hardiness and flower power. They have long been an old Southern favorite with their bold strap like foliage and showy pink, to red, to white flowers.

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.

Blazing Star – WOW, Border Garden, and others
Blazing star (Liatris spicata) is one of our most dramatic native perennials producing tall spikes of purple-pink flowers that are very attractive to both people and pollinators. It is just one of several North American Liatris species. They also make a superb cut-flower, just make sure you plant a few extra to leave in the garden for those pollinators.
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.

Chaste Tree – Hummingbird Garden, Virginia Native Plant Garden, Canal Bank
Chaste tree’s (*Vitex agnus-castus*) common name comes from the fact that people believed (erroneously) that the influence from this tree would keep one’s thoughts and desires pure. It was also said that the Vestal Virgins of ancient Rome would adorn themselves with this plant as a symbol of their chastity. That may be a lot to ask of a plant, but who doesn’t like a tree with blue flowers?

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.

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 – Virginia Native Plant Garden
Some of our most unusual native plants are the native pitcher plants (*Sarracenia* species). They have flowers like few others, and the plants themselves are made up of colorful pitcher-like structures. However, there is a dark side. Pitcher plants are carnivorous and lure unsuspecting insects into their pitchers, where the prey will find the structure covered in downward facing hairs which make it impossible to climb out. Waiting at the bottom of the pitcher is not sweet tea, but digestive juices ready to help turn insects into plant food.

Giant Coneflower – Baker Perennial Garden, The Border Garden
A member of the black-eyed Susan family, giant coneflower (*Rudbeckia maxima*) has the typical yellow petals of its cousins, surrounding an elongated cone. Unlike others, the flower stalks can get 6-7’ tall and rise above large, blue-green foliage, which gives rise to its other common name of cabbage leaf coneflower. The flowers attract a number of pollinators, and later birds will relish the seeds.

Butterfly House – Butterfly Garden
Our butterfly house opens for the season in mid-June. Inside you will not only find an assortment of butterflies native to Virginia, but you will also find volunteers and interns who can tell you everything you need to know. Both inside the house and in the Butterfly Garden you can see a wide variety of plants that attract adult butterflies, but just as important you will see a variety of host plants that caterpillars need.

Bonsai Collection – Transition Garden
NBG is somewhat unique that our bonsai collection is managed by a group of dedicated and passionate 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 plants growing in our gardens or nursery.

Wildlife Watch – Flocks of goldfinches have been seen throughout the Garden looking for food. Right now they are enjoying the tall verbena-on-a-stand (*Verbena bonariensis*) growing around NATO Pond.

Les Parks, Director of Horticulture