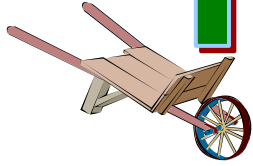


# The Wheelbarrow



[www.saps.us](http://www.saps.us)

Southern Appalachian Plant Society

April 2020

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The April SAPS meeting has been cancelled.

We hope the speaker can be rescheduled in the future.

## UNCERTAIN TIMES

Social distancing affects us all with cancellations of events that some have looked forward to for a year, shortages of items that we take for granted, the disruption of schedules and appointments. We have concerns about loved ones and anxieties about safety.

In the midst of this, we have Spring with its infinite and changing beauty. People who are connected to nature know that there are cycles of life and they aren't all exactly the way we would like them. There's nothing like watching two solid weeks of rain or a couple of months (or years) of drought to show us that we are not in control. There is also nothing like seeing our trees in bloom and bulbs popping up their heads with sudden flowers to help us realize that the wonders of nature are an ongoing joy and blessing.

This issue of The Wheelbarrow has information about events and cancellations. However it also includes some items that I hope are interesting and informative.

## Gardening for Wellness While Homebound

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The past few weeks have been challenging for many of us as we've been forced to change our daily routines and remain largely homebound. Despite the uprooting of our lives, plants continue to flourish around us, showing off their springtime blossoms and reminding us that planting season has arrived--or is coming soon-- in many parts of the country.

Tending to plants and creating gardens or pollinator patches are some of the most healing and healthy ways to get through our homebound days. Here are some things you can do in the coming days and weeks:

Learn from experts by watching free [Good Gardening Videos](#), which have been curated for accuracy and quality

- Get questions answered about plants and gardening specific to your geographic area by contacting the Master Gardeners program in your state. Note that there may be a delayed response, depending on their current work situation.
- Learn about some of the best plants for supporting our critical pollinator population by reading related articles from AHS's The American Gardener.
- Consider ordering seeds for butterfly and/or hummingbird gardens via [Renee's Seeds](#), which donates part of its sales back to the nonprofit American Horticultural Society.
- Clear invasive plants from your yard and learn what native plants are best for your area by contacting your state's native plant society.



Trillium cuneatum

## Upcoming Events and Cancellations:

April 2

Herb Saplings meeting. Canceled.

April 16

SAPS meeting. Pocket Gardens - The Use of Native Plants in Small Spaces. Canceled

April 17-18

Mid Atlantic Garden Faire. Abingdon, VA. Canceled.

May 7

Herb Saplings tour of Joe Hollis' Mountain Gardens. Meet to carpool Ingle's parking lot. 2pm. <https://www.mountaingardensherbs.com/>

May 21

SAPS Meeting. Not Tonight Deer – No More Long-Legged Rats in your Garden. Frank Hyman, garden lecturer, author and landscape designer. 7 pm. King-sport Higher Ed Center.

No final decision has yet been made on whether or not to hold the Exchange Place Spring Garden Fair. Current thinking is that we would like to at least have a Plant Sale either on April 25-26 or in mid-May if conditions are deemed safe. Our top priority is keeping our community healthy, but we would like to help our local growers and raise some money for Exchange Place if public health guidelines permit. We will send out a notice later to let SAPS members know of the status of the sale or you may call Joy Moore 423-348-6572, or check Exchange Place on Facebook or see <https://www.exchangeplace.info/>.

### Three Really Cool Shade Plants

Contributed by Hugh Conlon

In our crowded gardens, many plants must cope with intense shade. I grow hostas, Solomon seal, coral bells (*Heuchera spp.*), ferns, and others. I want to mention three lesser known shade plants that provide beauty and enjoyment and are long-lived, low-care woodland favorites.

Fairy wings



**Fairy wings (*Epimedium spp.*)**, aka barrenworts, thrive in shady spots. Fairy wings are a plant collector's dream. Over 70 species and hybrids are available and more enter the market every year. No two cultivars are exactly alike in flowering, foliage, and seasonal color. Species may vary from 6 to 20 inches in height and 10 to 24 inches in spread.

Warning - fairy wings start out slow-growing. Allow them 1- 2 years to grow on you as well. Foliage may be either evergreen or deciduous. Leaf shapes and colors are highly variable. Some start out chartreuse, later turn dark green, and finish with autumnal red foliage. Others may develop a red or silvery tint in the summer. Their dainty flowers appear in early spring and are rarely hurt by sub-freezing morning temps. Flowering intervals last three, sometimes four weeks long and invite early arriving bees and butterflies. Deer don't bother fairy wings.

**Bellworts (*Uvularia spp.*)**, aka merrybells, are U.S natives and contribute to early spring's awakening. On two species, *U. grandiflora* and *U. perfoliata*, the

flower stems poke through the center of the leaves.

Bellworts



Medium green leaves turn clear yellow in early fall. A species, called "wild oats" (*U. sessilifolia*), also grows native in our local woodlands. In east Tennessee bellworts bloom in April and May. Among the easiest of wildflowers to grow, their nodding bell-shaped flowers are a springtime delight. Bellworts appear delicate, but are hardy and enduring. Over the

years individual clumps colonize themselves from thick fleshy white underground stolons.

**Shredded umbrella plant (*Syneilesis aconitifolia*)**, native to eastern Asia, are a bit more finicky to grow. In early spring exquisite dissected umbrella-like leaves emerge covered with hairy silver hairs. Plants stand 18 -24 inches tall with sturdy stems. As the plant ages, the pubescent hairs disappear and leaves turn deep forest green. Eventually, small plant colonies arise from underground rhizomes (2 feet wide in 5-7 years). Flowers are mostly inconspicuous. All three plants prefer partial to full shade and a humus-rich, moist, well-drained woodsy soil. They perform best in dappled morning sunlight. Fairy wings and bellworts tolerate dry calcareous (limestone) soils. Plants tolerate short dry spells lasting 2-3 weeks once established. Humus supplies much of their needed nutrients.

All three plants are rarely found at local garden centers. Shop on-line nurseries specializing in shade or woodland plants. Plant Delights Nursery in Raleigh, NC sells the newest cultivars of epimediums.

Knowing that this might be a different kind of Spring, several SAPS members have contributed descriptions of some favorite plants that are not on the beaten path.

Becky Millhorn

**Mahonias (grape holly)**-what a wonderful plant. They bloom in winter with a beautiful yellow bloom that attracts bees and then have a grape-like berry that hangs on through spring. Their leaves are a deep glossy green throughout the year. Tolerates shade to part shade.

**PJM Rhododendron** - Beautiful leaves that turn burgundy in fall into winter. Blooms in March through June. Beautiful flowers that are lavender. Tolerates part shade.

**Pulmonaria (lungworts)**- Wonderful shade plant. Interesting green leaves with white spots. It was once said the leaves were the shape of human lungs. The flowers are blue and pink mixed. Blooms March through May. Shade to part shade.

**Camellias**- I cannot say enough good things about camellias. Single and double flowers. Many colors. If planting different types, will have blooms throughout the year. My favorite is Yuletide, fall bloomer.... tolerates part to full sun.

**PawPaw tree (*Asimina triloba*)** - This is a native tree. Delicious fruit. Beautiful blooms and host tree for the zebra swallowtail butterfly.

**Chinese Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis x intermedia*)**. Delicate spider like blooms. Different colors. Coppery and yellow. Blooms February through March. Full sun

Joy Moore

**Trilliums *Trillium spp.***

One of our showiest, most magical spring wildflowers  
Easy to grow in deciduous woods and will colonize if you're patient and learn to identify the young plants (so you don't mistake them for weeds).  
Plants are long lived. Fascinating natural history - seeds dispersed by ants, takes 7 years from seed to bloom.



**Sourwood**

***Oxydendrum arboretum***

Lovely sprays of "lily of the valley" flowers in early summer

Brilliant deep red fall foliage. Pale fruit capsules are almost as showy as the flowers and hang on through winter.

Good bee plant – sourwood honey

**Aromatic aster *Symphoricaricum oblongifolium***

Lovely blue violet flowers.

The last plants blooming in my garden (into November), providing pollen and nectar for those last bumble bees hanging around.

Low maintenance.

Joy Stewart

**Large Beardtongue (*Penstemon grandiflorus*)**

One of the showiest North American penstemons

2-3 feet tall; large, lavender to pink, horizontally arranged tubular flowers. Full sun, blooms in May and June.

Effective planted en masse; easy to grow from seed

Native to US but not TN.

Requires good drainage and prefers sandy soil. Tolerates heavy clay soils if on a slope with no standing water.

**Standing Cypress (*Ipomopsis rubra*)**

This species is relatively unknown; easy to propagate and beautiful  
A biennial, in its first year it is a unique 10-12" tall, feathery, fern-like plant. In the second year, it shoots up to 5 feet with a sturdy stem and brilliant red tubular flowers loved by hummingbirds and butterflies. No staking needed. It prefers full to part sun, tolerates a range of soils including clay. Re-seeds well. Put out seed two years in a row and you should have an annual supply of flowers.

**Pink Turtlehead (*Chelone lyonii*)**

One of my favorites because it is so easy to grow, unique and dependable, spreading slowly by rhizomes to form an eye-catching solid patch. It is named for the fact that its flower resembles a turtle's head. Prefers full to part sun. A wetland plant, it will do fine with medium moisture. Prefers loamy soil but will tolerate clay. Plant it at the base of a slight slope and it will be happy with a little extra moisture.

### Three Spring Favorite Plants

Kenneth Soergel

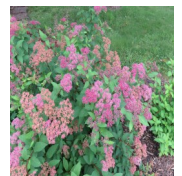
Here are three plants that I have enjoyed over the years, yet very seldom do I specify in a design:

**Hellebores** (Lenten roses) first open in late winter and they will still be blooming in late March and much of April. Their blooms have lasted for weeks as a cut flower inside to brighten the kitchen window sill with light pinkish-rose flowers.

They are planted on a Northerly location.

**Daffodils** (Narcissus) line one side of the driveway planted in a gentle arch of varying width plant bed. They bloom for weeks even when snow was blanketing the ground around them. Some of our varieties have pure yellow flowers, others have two striking colors and different petal shapes/margins. They are also pest free.

**Anthony Waterer Spirea** is planted on a gentle mound adjacent to our bluebird house. New spring foliage is an attractive reddish purple along with tiny pink bundles of flowers. It is a beautiful feature in our rock garden as well as a foil for the flitting bluebirds.



# *Across the President's Desk*

*By Earl Hockin*

I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy during these trying times. Luckily, as gardeners, we still have the opportunity to support our own physical and mental wellbeing by staying active in our gardens. As I have written before there are scientifically proven physical, emotional and mental health benefits to gardening and connecting with the natural world. Though we are now enjoying Spring it is not too late during the first couple of weeks to plant most cool season vegetables whether in raised beds, traditional garden patches or containers. After the middle of the month we have, according to the Department of Agriculture, less than 50% chance of frost so you can begin planting warm season vegetables and ornamental annuals.

If you are purchasing garden supplies, seeds, transplants, potting soil, etc during these times, please purchase from local suppliers, growers, and nurseries as their businesses will be seriously impacted by the drop in consumer activity during this Covid-19 crisis.

Between April 15<sup>th</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup> is the time to use a lawn fertilizer that includes a weed killing herbicide if you want to control broad leaf weeds. When cutting your lawn remember to cut it no shorter than 3" tall as a way to help control weeds. If you want to be in the lead for new garden trends that are environmentally friendly consider converting some of your lawn to a meadow. If you do so be

sure to check out the list of invasive plants in Tennessee at <https://www.tn.gov/protectnforests/forest-health/invasive-plants.html> When planning to undertake this project check out this site from PennState Extension. <https://extension.psu.edu/meadows-and-prairies-wildlife-friendly-alternatives-to-lawn>

As you are enjoying the early spring blooming bulbs such as daffodils, tulips and hyacinth remember this is the time to plant summer bulbs, rhizomes and corms such as caladium, canna, crocosmia, dahlia, gladiolus, iris, Asiatic and Oriental lilies.

Prune roses no later than April 15<sup>th</sup>. It is not too late to plant shrubs if you want to add some to your garden.

At this time no one knows for sure how long this Coronavirus pandemic will impact our lives. I am hopeful, but not optimistic, that it will be over by summer. In order to follow CDC guidelines and regulations from governments and institutions we have cancelled our March and April meetings. We will also very likely have to cancel other future events. We will post updates on our website [www.saps.us](http://www.saps.us), on our Southern Appalachian Plant Society Facebook page and will send out emails. If you do not have computer/internet access please call me at 423-817-5473 and I will arrange to ensure you are phoned about any updates.

## **Support Our Local Growers**

We gardeners will be looking for veggie, fruit, and herb plants this spring as we learn anew the value of growing our own food and for flowers, trees and shrubs to lift our spirits. Most of our local growers are open with plants to sell. Please support them when you feel safe going out to purchase plants, so they will be able to weather this challenging time and continue to provide us with the plants we want and need. Some local plant sellers are reaching out via email and/or social media to let gardeners know that they are open, what plants they have to sell, and what precautions they are taking to ensure customer safety, like disinfecting surfaces and practicing social distancing.

**Shy Valley Plant Farm** will schedule shoppers by appointment with no more than 4 on site at any time. You can also order plants for pick up at the nursery or in Kingsport. <http://www.shyvalleyfarm.com/> 423-348-6570.

**Onks Greenhouses & Garden Center** will take phone orders and load the plants in your car. 423-791-4092 (cell); 423-467-0007.

**Good Hope Garden Center** 423-323-7200 has stock outside. Will deliver vegetable starts, etc., in local area with \$30 minimum purchase.

**The Wicked Plant Shop**, 3856 Fort Henry Drive, Kingsport 423-726-2446 will take phone orders and will deliver to car or within Kingsport city limits. Stock is posted on Facebook.

**Thomas Hollow Nursery's** Facebook page says most nursery stock is outside in fresh air or in large cold frames so you don't need to worry about being in confined spaces. 276-466-1057.

**Silver Lake Garden Center** has online shopping. [www.slgardencent.com](http://www.slgardencent.com) 423-357-4582.

**Evergreen H&G Showplace, Kingsport** 423-245-4769 is practicing social distancing, disinfecting surfaces, opening doors for more ventilation. Will take orders by phone for pick up. **Evergreen of Johnson City** 423-282-3431 is open only for phone-n orders and delivery service (small fee).

Local growers need your business and will work with you to help you feel comfortable with your shopping plan. Check their websites for their offerings. **Call them.** They will help you figure out how to shop safely.