

Boerner Through the Seasons

2011 Garden Walks with Melinda Myers

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Spring Sensations

What a difference a year can make. We found many different flowers blooming for our spring walk this year. The cool spring (or should I say late winter) has helped extend the bloom of many plants and delay flowering on others. Last spring's warm weather quickly ushered us through spring and rapidly into the heat and flooding of summer.

The changeable weather can be frustrating but it can add variety, unexpected beauty and of course challenges to our landscape's beauty and gardening efforts. Be sure to visit my website to see what was blooming for last year's walk. And as we grumble about the weather just remember, if we wait five minutes it will change.

- 1. Korean Spice Viburnum** – *Viburnum carlesii* 'Compacta'
Fragrant flowers, in spring (prune after flowering if needed), 3 to 4 feet tall and wide, great fall color (red, orange and purple), sparse fruit, Viburnum borer can be a problem, full sun to part shade, moist well-drained soil, Zones 4 to 8
- 2. Oregon Grape Holly** – *Mahonia aquifolium* 'Flame'
Yellow flowers in spring, blue-black fruit in late summer to fall, evergreen foliage turning purplish in fall, Flame (Orange Flame) has bronze-orange new foliage, Shade preferred, moist well-drained, Plant in a protected location, 3 to 6 feet tall and wide, Zone 4 to 8
- 3. Creeping Phlox** – *Phlox subulata* 'Emerald Blue'
Early spring blooms of white, purples, pink, red and bicolor, prune back after flowering for better appearance, evergreen leaves, Full sun and well-drained to dry soil, 3-6" tall by 3' +, Zones 3 to 9
- 4. Crown Imperial** – *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Rubra'
Yellow, orange or red bell shaped blooms topped with a tuft of greens, Shade to partial shade (full sun in cooler regions), well-drained soils a must (those in heavy soils may want to plant the bulb on its side), plant in fall with other spring flowering bulbs, skunky smell, animal resistant, zones 5 to 8
- 5. Daffodils** – *Narcissus* spp.
Yellow, white, peach, orange and various combinations, singles and doubles with short or long trumpets, animal resistant, shade tolerant, good for naturalizing, combines nicely with minor



bulbs like squills and grape hyacinths, Daffodil, Narcissus and jonquils are often used as common names. Jonquils (*Narcissus jonquilla*) have small multiple fragrant flowers on plants with flat reed-like leaves) Zones 4 to 8

6. Virginia Bluebells – *Mertensia virginica*

Blue tubular flowers in clusters atop large leaves that decline after flowering, Spreads readily, Sun or shade, prefers moist soils, native, hummingbirds and butterflies attracted, Mixes with daffodils and hosta as well as other bulbs and perennials, Zones 3 to 9

7. China Girl® Evergreen Holly – *Ilex x meserveae* ‘Mesog’

Evergreen holly, red fruit (attracts birds) , with heat and cold tolerance, plant in protected spot, prefers moist well-drained acidic soil, need one male for every 5 females, usually deer resistant, Zone 5 (possibly 4)

8. Dutchman’s Pipe – *Aristolochia manshuriensis* Old fashioned favorite used for screening porches, full sun or shade, most soils though will wilt in drought, flowers have unique “pipe-like” shape often masked by the leaves, food source for pipevine swallowtail, twines, Zones 4 to 8

9. Scarlet Elderberry – *Sambucus pubens*

Native to rocky woods (Great Smokey Mountains), whitish-yellow flowers in May, red, white or yellow fruit in summer that birds love, zones 4 to 6

10. Flowering Quince – *Chaenomeles x superba* ‘Kinjishi’, ‘Cameo’, ‘Stanford Red’, ‘Pink Lady’

Spring bloom (can experience cold damage in northern limits), edible (when cooked), thorns, cutflower, Deer resistant, Zones 4 to 8

Kinjishi – 4 to 5’ tall, showy orange flowers in spring,

Cameo – 4 to 5 feet, double soft peach, no thorns

Stanford Red – 4 to 6 ‘ tall, tomato red flowers

Pink Lady – large pink flowers with yellow anthers

11. Lungwort – *Pulmonaria* spp.

Attractive foliage topped with early spring blooms of pink, white, red or pink fading to blue. Deer tend to resist, slugs will eat and powdery mildew can be a problem in areas with high humidity (Use variegated varieties to mask the problem). Shade to partial shade, foliage declines mid-summer when grown in full sun, Zones 3 to 8

12. Trillium – *Trillium grandiflorum*

Early spring bloomer, 3-petaled white flower, white berries, Moist organic soils (incorporate compost into soil, use leaf mold...) Shade, Zones 4 to 9

13. Clove Currant – *Ribes odoratum*

Fragrant yellow flowers, 6 to 8 ft tall suckering shrub, black berries on female plants, yellow fall color with tinge of red, full sun to part shade, zone 4

14. Merrybells, Large-flowered Bellwort – *Uvularia grandiflora*

Yellow bell shaped flowers atop twisted stems, 18 to 24” tall, Part of full shade with fertile moist soil, Zones 4 to 9

15. Fairybells – *Disporum flavens*

Lemon yellow bell-shaped flowers, 2-3' tall with leaves reminiscent of bamboo, Partial to full shade and moist soils, Native to woodlands, Zones 3 to 8

16. Spring Vetchling – *Lathyrus vernus*

Listed as non invasive, fragrant spring bloomer - long lasting flowers, flowers change reddish purple to deep dark violet, attracts birds, butterflies and bees, full sun to partial shade in north and shade best in the south, prefers alkaline soil & consistent moisture when young, zones 5-7

17. Summer Snowflake – *Leucojum aestivum* 'Gravetye Giant'

White downward facing bellshaped flowers, on 12 to 18" plants, plant bulbs 3" deep, Partial shade to full sun, well-drained moist soils, great for naturalizing, Zones 3 – 9

18. Mayapple – *Podophyllum peltatum*

A single, smelly flower just below a set of two large leaves provide a tropical appearance, followed by a yellow oval shaped berry, partial shade, moist soil, will spread if happy and may need to be contained in small gardens, Bold texture nice for the shade, Zones 4 to 8

19. Windflower – *Anemone blanda*

Sky-blue, red, white or pink flowers, 3-6" tall, full sun to partial shade, moist well-drained organic soil, sheltered from the wind, plant tubers in fall (Zone 5 they may need to be handled like glads) Zones 5 to 8

20. Creeping Charlie – *Glechoma hederacea* - Grows in sun or shade, foliage fragrant when crushed, tolerates traffic, purple-blue flowers in spring., spreads readily and most gardeners are trying to kill it. Pull (takes time and persistence and any piece left behind can root and start new plant, broadleaf herbicides applied to plants in the LAWN when in full bloom or fall after hard freeze, Total vegetation killer for plants in GARDEN.

21. Golden Ninebark – *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Aurea' - Amazing yellow spring foliage turning green in summer, yellowish fall color, white and pinkish flower, exfoliating bark for winter interest, 4 to 5' tall and wide, full sun or partial shade, regular pruning improves overall appearance, zone 2 to 7

22. Flowering Quince – *Chaenomeles speciosa* 'Rubrifolia'

Single or double scarlet to red flowers in spring (prune after flowering if needed), fruit is yellowish green (looks like lumpy apple), bitter when raw but used for jams and jellies, Full sun to part shade, Zones 4 to 8 or 9 but flower buds often killed in cold temps.

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23. Grefsheim Spirea – *Spirea x cinera* ‘Grefsheim’

Branches covered with small white flowers, superior, 4 to 5’ tall and wide, one of the more superior of early blooming spirea, flowers on old wood (prune after flowering if needed), Zone 4

24. Serviceberry – *Amelanchier* spp.

Four season plant, spring bloom edible (you and the birds) fruit, good fall color (yellow, orange, brick red), smooth gray bark, tree and shrub forms, full sun to part shade, moist soil, slow to establish, zones 4 – 9

Amelanchier x grandiflora ‘Autumn Brilliance’, good red fall color, 20-25’ tall

25. Fox Grape Fritillaria – *Fritillaria assyriaca*, syn. *Fritillaria uva-vulpis*

Nodding brownish-purple bellshaped flowers with gold rim, well-drained soils, disagreement on hardiness (found it rated hardy for as cold as zone 3 or only to zone 7)

Woodland Wildflowers – Many gardeners struggle with shade. Consider using woodland wildflowers to add color and texture to the shady areas in your landscape. Most woodland wildflowers prefer moist organic soil. Incorporate organic matter into the soil in areas void of trees. DO NOT cover tree roots with soil or till the tree’s root zone when planting these or other flowers beneath established trees. Mulch the soil with shredded leaves. Keep soil moist as the plants become established and wait.

Never dig wildflowers out of native areas. Purchase plants and seeds from nature centers, garden centers, and other reliable sources.

See More Spring Blooms covered in the 2010 From Boerner to Your Backyard Virtual Garden Walk

**For more information on these and other plants,
visit the Ask Melinda database at www.melindamyers.com**

