

Plants for Winter Blooms

When we are in the grips of winters gray skies and cold temperatures there are a few plants to help brighten our days!

One of the first is a witch hazel, specifically *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Diane' or 'Jelena'. These long-lasting, reddish, strap-like flowers bloom from January to March, but opening and closing depends on the weather.



H. x intermedia 'Diane'

This multi-stemmed plant can be a large shrub or small tree and requires room to grow, so don't over crowd! In general it requires moist, acidic soil and full sun to part shade.

Leaves are a dark green, and have an irregular shape. Fall color is dependent on the cultivar but is usually very good and ranging in colors from yellow to orange to red.

This plant is relatively problem free except for some suckering. Most cultivars of *Hamamelis x intermedia* are grafted and usually suckers will come from below the graft union.



H. x intermedia 'Jelena'



H. x intermedia (left & right)



What vegetable was forbidden on the ships of Arctic explorers?

~*~

Leeks!

The second plant is an evergreen groundcover shrub topping out at 18"-24", called sweet box (*Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis*).



This plant prefers part to full shade (tends to be off-colored in full sun) and likes a well drained, moist and fertile soil.

The leaves are a dark lustrous green that are narrow and pointed at tips. Typically blooming in late winter, it produces small off-



white flowers that are fragrant but can be hidden by the leaves. The flowers form small black globose fruit visible in the fall.

The next plant is becoming more popular on Long Island, the camellia (Japanese camellia, *Camellia japonica* or Sasanqua camellia, *Camellia sasanqua*).

These shrubs have beautiful leathery evergreen foliage. The Japanese camellia can be pyramidal shaped and attain a height of 10'-15', while the Sasanqua has more of a variable habit and can grow to 6'-10'. However, specific cultivars have may also have different forms and heights.



These once Southern only plants prefer a moist, well drained soil rich with organic matter. They also prefer full sun but a light shade may be better to protect them from the harsh summer sun.

Also when deciding where to place your camellia, select a site that provides protection from windy and exposed areas.

The Japanese camellia typically blooms from late winter to mid spring and the Sasanqua can bloom from late fall to early winter.



'Snow Flurry'

'Long Island Pink'

Some of the cultivars available here are 'Long Island Pink', 'Northern Exposure', 'Snow Flurry', 'Winter's Cupid', 'Winter's Interlude', 'Winter's Joy', 'Winter's Peony', and 'Winter's Star'.

The final plant is Christmas rose, or *Helleborus niger*, a herbaceous perennial.

This plant's foliage lasts well into winter before withering and being replaced with the year's new foliage. Leaves are deeply dissected and palmate (think "human hand").

It prefers a part to full shade exposure and a well drained, fertile soil but may be slow to

establish. This clump forming 8"-12" plant would also prefer a site protected from winter winds.

The Christmas rose has rose-like blooms that are white and fade to pink with yellow stamens in their center and bloom January to March.



~*~

*In this loveliest of season
may you find many
reasons for happiness and
the year ahead full of
contentment and joy!*

*~The Organically Green
Team*

~*~

*"In seed time learn, in harvest
teach, in winter enjoy."
~William Blake*



Organically Grown

Penne with Carmelized Onions and Winter Squash



Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 onions, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 small winter squash, cut into cubes (about 4 cups)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 12 ounces penne, cavatelli or gemelli past
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Directions:

1. In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onions, sugar, salt, and pepper; sauté for 1 minute. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer, stirring often, for about 15 minutes or until the onions start to turn golden. Stir in the squash and sage. Increase the heat to medium-high and boil, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes or until the onions are caramelized and the squash is almost tender.

2. Meanwhile, in a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the pasta for about 9 minutes or until tender but firm. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking water. Return the pasta to the pot.

3. Add the wine to the skillet and boil, scraping up any brown bits stuck to the pan. Pour over the pasta in the pot. Add the oil and toss gently to coat, adding just enough of the reserved cooking liquid to moisten to desired consistency. Season to taste with more salt and pepper, as needed.

Makes 9 cups (4 servings)

Tip: Butternut squash is the easiest squash to peel and cut into cubes; however, any hard winter squash works nicely in this dish. If you find the squash tricky to peel, cut it into chunks or wedges and microwave for 1 to 2 minutes, or place in a 350°F oven for about 5 minutes, to soften the skin.

Note: We recommend using certified organic ingredients, when available, in all recipes to maximize flavors and nutrition while minimizing your risk of exposure to pesticides, chemicals and preservatives.

Services for 2012:

We offer the following services to help increase the enjoyment and beauty of your property:

Tree / Shrub:

- ❖ Shrub & Tree Spraying / Fertilization Programs
- ❖ Integrated Pest Management
- ❖ Soil Restoration
- ❖ Plant and Soil Stimulation Program
- ❖ Deep Root Feeding
- ❖ Root Growth Enhancement
- ❖ Mature Tree Restoration
- ❖ Air Spading
- ❖ Radial Trenching
- ❖ Vertical Mulching
- ❖ Anti-Desiccant Spraying
- ❖ General Tree and Shrub Maintenance Removal

Turf:

- ❖ Lawn Renovation
- ❖ Fertilization
- ❖ Overseeding
- ❖ Core Aeration
- ❖ Estate / Property Purification

Organic Pest Control:

- ❖ Flying Insect
- ❖ Deer / Geese
- ❖ Rodent Repellent
- ❖ Organic Tick & Flea Control

We also offer Outdoor Holiday Décor.

Call (631) 467-7999 for a free estimate!

