

What's In Bloom?

AT ADKINS ARBORETUM IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY



Alnus serrulata (AWL-nus sayr-ruh-LA-ta) swamp alder—one of the earliest trees to flower is the alder in the Arboretum's marsh. The catkins holding male flowers begin to form in winter and will open to disperse pollen to the wind in early spring. Look for the rounded female cones that held seeds last year.



Ilex opaca (EYE-lex oh-PAK-ah) American holly—A favorite evergreen native naturally found as an understory tree in moist woods. The traditional Christmas holly with large, spring-green to dark-green leaves and bright red berries, it is an important winter food source for birds. Found along floodplains at the Arboretum.



Magnolia virginiana (mag-NO-lee-ah ver-jin-ee-AY-nah) Sweet bay magnolia—This magnolia grows as a large shrub or small deciduous or semi-evergreen tree. Distinguished by its deep, rich shiny, green leaves with a white, velvety under surface. Prefers moist soils. Bark is gray on older trees, light green and downy on new branches. Found throughout the wet forest areas of the Arboretum.



Juniperus virginiana (jew-NIP-er-us vir-gin-ee-AY-nah) Eastern red cedar—Common in old fields, the trunks of this tree have beautiful peeling red bark that contrasts with blue-green to purple-brown needles. Females produce blue berries in fall which are eaten by wildlife. There are many red cedars at the edges of the north and south meadows.



Tipularia discolor (tip-u-LAYR-ee-ah DIS-cuh-lur) Crane fly orchid—On the forest floor along the Upland Walk look for a tight collection of green leaves, perhaps showing a tan withered bloom stalk. This native orchid produces chlorophyll from fall until late spring when the forest canopy is open. Turn the leaves over to find a beautiful velvety purple color.



Packera aurea (PAK-er-uh AW-ree-uh) Golden groundsel—Look for green heart-shaped basal leaves peeking through the dry leaves and snow in winter. It likes moist, swampy areas, growing prolifically along Blockston Branch. In early spring flat-topped clusters of yellow rayed flowers bloom atop straight stems. Packera is in the aster family.

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Euonymus americanus (yew-ON-ih-mus a-mer-i-CAN-us) Strawberry bush or Hearts-a-bursting—Abundant in moist woods, the strawberry bush is quiet in winter except for its vertical, skinny green stems that look skinny and almost weed-like. In January and February inconspicuous small green leaves may still cling to the stems.



Smilax rotundifolia (SMY-lax row-tun-di-FOHL-ee-ah) Roundleaf greenbriar—Most often viewed as a climbing vine on trees or crawling along the forest floor, the greenbriar can also form a grand tangle that resembles a bush. Its stems stay green in winter and sometimes the leaves. Its sharp thorns make contact with humans very interesting!



Polytrichum sp. (pol-ee-TRIK-um) Hairy cap moss - Examine the delightful shapes of the small ferny moss and the hairy cap moss, growing in shade along the paths without roots or a vascular system. Thriving with sufficient moisture, their systems are fine tuned to utilize the filtered light to grow and reproduce. Micro-communities of organisms important ecologically to the forest use moss for food, moisture and shelter.



Pinus taeda (PY-nus TAY-dah) Loblolly pine—Long evergreen needles growing in clusters of three and a long limbless trunk with green branches at the top identify the mature loblolly pine. A conifer, its prickly cones mature in two years, and winged seeds provide food for squirrels and turkeys. Found along the Upland and Tuckahoe Valley paths.



Pinus virginiana (PY-nus vir-gin-ee-AY-nuh) Virginia pine—Short twisted evergreen needles growing in clusters of two identify the Virginia pine. Grown in the open, it is broadly pyramidal; when crowded the branches and trunk twist seeking light. These pines are recognized for their ability to reclaim and build land too poor to support other tree growth. Look for these along the Upland Path and around the North Meadow.



Kalmia latifolia (KAL-mee-ah lat-ih-FOHL-ee-ah) Mountain laurel—Smooth dark green leaves remain on the mountain laurel throughout the winter. The twisted trunks have peeling reddish bark. Mountain laurel can grow in large stands known as “laurel hells” because of their dense, low growth. Look for mountain laurel along Tuckahoe Creekside path.