

Just follow the color

Story by Stephanie Jordan

Are you looking for a way to get away from winter's cold and dreary days? If so, you're in luck; conservatories in the area provide bright, fragrant blooms, even in the dead of winter

The U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG), located in Washington, D.C., offers its Conservatory, National Garden and Bartholdi Park for visitors. Admission is free.

The conservatory, open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., features a variety of living exhibits, with 4,000 plants on display.

Beginning Feb. 2 and ending April 13, you can view the conservatory's "An Alphabet Garden of Orchids" exhibit.

The exhibit is designed to celebrate the beauty and diversity of orchids, and will feature hundreds of orchids, some rare and endangered species, from the USBG and the Smithsonian Institution's Horticultural Division.

A variety of programs throughout the exhibit are available for visitors to learn more about orchids, including workshops on painting orchids in oil or watercolor; repotting your own orchids; photographing orchids; tours led by a USBG orchid expert; lectures on orchids as a plant family; and the



For a true escape from winter, take a walk through the conservatory at the U.S. Botanic Garden to view the Garden Court and the Jungle, among others. (Photo courtesy U.S. Botanical Garden). Opposite page, the Longwood Gardens conservatory offers four acres with 20 different gardens featuring plants from all over the world. (Photo courtesy Longwood Gardens)

mysteries of orchid pollination.

For more information about these programs, call 202-225-1116.

In addition to the orchid exhibit, USBG offers "Plants in Culture" and "How Plants Work." "Plants in Cul-

ture" is located in the West Gallery of the conservatory, and offers visitors a glimpse of the plants that have played an important role in developing therapy, ornamentation, music, ceremony and language. (PAGE 40)

Spring will be here soon.
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NEW VARIETIES Great for '08!

Story by Carol Kinsley

It may be cold outside, but inside, gardeners are poring over catalogues to see what new plants are available for their landscapes this year

A good choice might be Geranium "Rozanne."

While most gardeners think of geraniums as an annual to be planted anew each year, this strong, hardy geranium is a perennial, a member of a genus commonly known as Crane's Bills because the seed pod is shaped like a crane's bill.

The Perennial Plant Association has named "Rozanne" as its Perennial Plant of the Year for 2008.

Discovered in a garden in Somerset, England, "Rozanne" has 2.5-inch, iridescent violet-blue, saucer-shaped flowers with purple-violet veins and radiant white centers.

Growing to 2 feet tall and 2 feet wide in full sun to partial shade, "Rozanne" blooms from late spring to mid fall.

It is heat-tolerant, but does better with afternoon shade.

Preferring moist, well-



Up close or at a distance, Geranium "Rozanne" flowers stand out. (Photo courtesy Blooms of Blessingham)

drained soil, "Rozanne" would make a dynamic ground cover, attractive specimen plant or hanging basket. It is a good companion plant to Shasta daisy, perennial salvia, speedwell, hostas and short ornamental grasses.

Attract butterflies to your garden with Eupatorium dubium "Little Joe." This highly versatile dwarf native perennial adapts quickly to various landscape situations and is drought-tolerant.

Hardy from Zone 4 to 9, it thrives in full sunlight. Discovered growing among a population of Eupatorium dubium seedlings in a Pennsylvania nursery, "Little Joe" has more compact upright growth habit and more compact inflorescence.

Another new, drought-tolerant plant loved by butterflies is a woody, Caryopteris x clandonensis "Grand Bleu," perfect for mass planting in



"Little Joe" adapts quickly to various landscape situations. (Photo courtesy The Conard-Pyle Co.)

dry sunny areas.

Its beautiful blue flowers bloom

from early August until the first frost.

Remember your grandmother's hydrangeas, perhaps growing by the front porch in white or blue?

New varieties for 2008 come not only in blue, such as Forever & Ever "Blue Heaven" and "Together," but in a range of pinks from "Double Pink" to "Red" and a bicolor "Peppermint" that's white with a brush-stroke of pink — or blue, depending on acidity — in the center of each white petal.

The large mophead flowers of the Forever & Eve series bloom on both old and new wood, and are hardy to Zone 4. To find a retailer, visit www.foreverhydrangea.com.

One hydrangea sparking a lot of interest is "Pinky Winky," named for a children's television character. Its unique, bicolor blooms and strong upright stems make this Hydrangea

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“Pink Marble” will grow in sun or partial shade and keeps its leaves year round. (Photo courtesy The Conard-Pyle Co.)



The deep pink, non-fading blooms of “Chamallow” are held on upright branches. (Photo courtesy The Conard-Pyle Co.)



“Eyecatcher” adds season-long color to any garden, container or landscape. (Photo courtesy www.provenwinners.com)



Named for a children’s television character, *Hydrangea paniculata* “Pinky Winky” will be a favorite with adults. The unique, bicolor blooms and strong upright stems of this Proven Winner will look great in the garden or as cut flowers in a vase. (Photo courtesy Spring Meadow Nursery)

paniculata stand out from the rest.

Its blooms are indeterminate, meaning it continues to produce new, pure white flowers even as the older flowers age to a deep pink at the base of the bloom.

Blooms can reach 12 to 16 inches in length. It is long blooming, reliable, showy and easy to grow.

Tolerant of full sun to partial shade, once established “Pinky

Winky” is drought-tolerant and will bloom until the first frost.

A great cut flower both fresh and dry, “Pinky Winky” is adaptable to difficult soils.

“Pinky Winky” is a Proven Winner, available from www.way-sidegardens.com or www.garden-crossings.com.

Spring Meadow Gardens introduced a whole line of compact

hydrangeas recently.

The Cityline series includes “Berlin,” the largest in the series, with clear pink flowers; “Paris,” a small plant with intense red flowers and excellent mildew resistance; “Venice” with big, bright fuchsia-colored flowers and glossy foliage; and “Vienna.”

For something low-growing and evergreen, try *Microbiota decussata* “Fuzzball,” a new fuzzy-textured form of *Microbiota* or Russian arborvitae that was discovered on the growing grounds at Conard-Pyle.

Another mostly green plant with lots of interest is *Photinia fraserii* “Pink Marble.”

This woody plant keeps its leaves all year round, and new foliage in the spring bursts forth in hot pink. Hardy in Zones 6 to 9, this photinia grows in sun or partial shade.

Another new plant, this one



“Fuzzball” is a new fuzzy-textured form of *Microbiota* or Russian Arborvitae, discovered on the growing grounds at Conard-Pyle. (Photo courtesy The Conard-Pyle Co.)

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with lots of color, is Clematis “Sapphire Indigo.”

Its continuous blooming makes it perfect for containers as well as traditional clematis use.

This new purple clematis has a smaller, more contained habit and will grow in sun or partial shade.

Also colorful is Lavatera hybrida “Chamallow,” another woody.

In May, the deep pink, non-fading blooms of ‘Chamallow’ are held on straight, upright branches.

The lavatera species are known as tree mallows. Chamallow is hardy in Zones 7 through 9 and require full sun.

Other new woodies include Weigla florida “Eyecatcher,” with electric yellow and green variegated leaves that will add season-long color to any garden, container or landscape.

Growing to 2 feet high, it



Bangle Genista produces waves of electric yellow flowers in early spring. (Photo courtesy www.provenwinners.com)

also boasts dark red flowers in the spring.

Partial or filtered shade is essential for this variety will attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

Also electric yellow, but this time with the color in the flower, is Genista lydia “Select” or Bangle Genista, which produces waves of yellow flowers in early spring.

Its improved branching and texture makes it a wonderful plant for containers and mass plantings.

It is available from www.way-sidegardens.com.

This new, low mounding selection of Genista blooms in mid-spring for three to six weeks.

This nearly leafless plant has bright green stems that provide interesting year-round texture and color.

One of two new echinaceas from The Conard-Pyle Co., “Purple Fantasy” develops an even more intense color with the onset of colder temperatures in the fall.



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The other is Echinacea purpurea "Panther Pink," a dwarf coneflower found at Holly Hill Farms.

For many years breeders have been searching for a better rose, one that can be grown like any other shrub — without fungicides.

A few select plants met the challenge and remained clean after four years without a single fungicide treatment.

Thus the Oso Easy roses were born and have emerged as a whole new class of rose offered as a Proven Winner.

So throw away the sprayer and enjoy these easy-to-maintain roses: Fragrant Spreader Rosa x "Chewground," a low-growing rose with fragrant, single, pink flowers; Peachy Cream Rosa x "Horcoherent," a lovely low-mounded rose that delivers clouds of blooms that emerge peach and transform to cream, contrasting



'Purple Fantasy' has more intense color with the onset of colder temperatures. (Photo courtesy The Conard-Pyle Co.)

nicely with the dark green foliage; Paprika Rosa x "ChewMayTime,"

a low-mounded rose with loads of spicy, reddish-orange single blooms accentuated with a bright yellow eye; Strawberry Crush Rosa x "Hormeteorie," with glossy green foliage and a rainbow of colorful pink, yellow and apricot blooms.

These roses are grown by Spring Meadow Nursery.

Not a rose, but a hibiscus, "Lil' Kim" hibiscus is a new Rose of Sharon — the first dwarf — with a dainty white flowers punctuated with a showy red eye.

The plant only reaches 3 to 4 feet high, and flowers last for three days instead of the typical single day.

This new shrub is available from www.waysidegardens.com or www.gardencrossings.com.

Order now, or plan to hit the garden centers early this year to find these new offerings. ➔

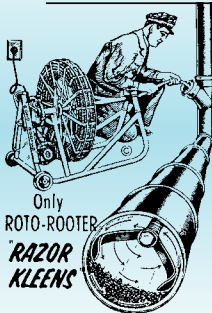
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