

# What's Blooming?

*November 2008*

*As you exit, please recycle this guide at our front door for the next visitor.*

## ***Begonia grandis ssp. evansiana* (hardy begonia)**

This late summer bloomer has pendulant soft, rose-pink, translucent flowers that tumble gracefully downward against lovely triangular leaves. The leaves with their prominent red-veined undersides are especially showy, when backlit by late afternoon sun. Acclaimed by poets and painters beginning in the Ming dynasty, this plant has long been a symbol of feminine modesty, beauty and virtue. You'll find this plant under the osmanthus tree in the in the Courtyard of Tranquility and along the west wall by the Painted Boat in Misty Rain. **(Map A)**

## ***Punica granatum 'Nana'* (pomegranate)**

This dwarf selection of pomegranate is grown in an enormous brown pot that can be found in the Courtyard of Tranquility, just south of the Hall of Brocade Clouds. Delicate, tissue paper-like petals burst out of thick, tubular, red-orange calyces. The fruit, with its abundant seeds, has long been a symbol of fertility among the Chinese. 'Nana' will produce the classic red fruit of commerce, but it is smaller and not customarily eaten. The pomegranate has been widely used in Chinese gardens since its arrival from the Middle East nearly 2,000 years ago—its native range is from Iran to the Himalayas in northern India. Contorted stems give this small tree an aged appearance making it a popular plant for 'penjing', the Chinese art of miniaturized landscape more commonly known as 'bonsai' in Japan. **(Map B)**

## ***Osmanthus heterophyllus 'Variegatus'* (variegated holly leaf osmanthus)**

This venerable tree presides over the Courtyard of Tranquility, located just inside the garden's entrance. Affectionately referred to as 'Old Gui,' it attests to the community spirit that helped our garden grow. This specimen was generously donated by a southeast Portland neighborhood where it was planted over one hundred years ago and is a rarity given its age and size. In autumn, Old Gui brings forth a crescendo of creamy white flowers so heavy with fragrance that passersby are compelled to linger in the streets beyond the garden wall. **(Map C)**

## ***Rosa chinensis 'Mutabilis'* (Chinese twelve month rose)**

Named for its tendency to bloom year around in temperate climates. This single flowering, bi-color rose bears loose, cup-shaped flowers which change from light yellow to peach and then to pink. *R. chinensis* 'Mutabilis' was used in the development of hybrid tea roses in England during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Find specimens next to Knowing the Fish Pavilion and in the southeast corner of the entry plaza near the trio of granite arches. **(Map D)**

## ***Stewartia pseudocamellia* (Japanese Stewartia)**

This species of stewartia catches the eye with an abundance of tissue soft, single white flowers set off by egg yolk yellow stamens that are a bit long of tooth. Note the delicate, layered branching pattern. *S. pseudocamellia* gets our vote in autumn as well when its leaves glow orange and red before falling. In time, a patchwork of pink, red-brown, and gray bark will develop on the trunk and branches. This is an excellent tree for smaller spaces. Also note that *S. pseudocamellia* is a member of the tea family. **(Map E)**

***Camellia sinensis* ‘Blushing Maiden’ (Tea Camellia)**

The custom of tea drinking in China began in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. and tea is easily the best known of all Chinese plant products. Pressed into blocks with flour, ginger, onion, and salt, tea was originally consumed as a soup. Drinking tea solely for pleasure began several centuries later and became an intimate part of the garden experience in Asia. Cultivated in warm temperate or near-tropical regions, tea plants will also thrive in the Portland area if their water needs are met in our dry summer months. See this pink-flowering selection of tea camellia at the west end of the covered bridge beneath a Japanese White Pine. **(Map F)**

***Firmiana simplex* (Chinese parasol tree)**

Towering over the east half of the garden, this quintessential Chinese tree can be found in nearly every scholar’s garden. It is said to be the only tree that the mythical phoenix will land upon, and then only when a just ruler has brought peace to the land. Since it is planted near the study, the scholar would be gently reminded on a daily basis of the importance of getting his work done on time, as it’s said to “shed one leaf a day until the land is locked in winter’s embrace.” It has huge lime green leaves and smooth gray-green bark that contribute to its sublime beauty, only to be outdone by the unusual seed heads currently dangling from its branch tips. **(Map G)**

***Dichroa febrifuga* (evergreen hydrangea)**

This hydrangea-relative is evergreen and in late spring, produces a mophead of petite flower buds that open to tiny, star-shaped blooms in the most incandescent of blues. Flowering continues through the summer, and come fall, branches are weighted with pendulant clusters of tiny pink fruits that gradually segue into metallic blue bb’s. **(Map H)**

***Tricyrtis* ‘Togen’ (toad lily)**

This is one of our favorites given its mid- to late summer bloom time. Flowers are lavender with yellow throats and dark purple spots. Visitors often compare them to orchids. Foliage is similar to false Solomon’s seal with oblong, deeply veined leaves. Toad lily can be found at many locations in the garden, including stands in the Phoenix Rest and along the Garden’s west wall just behind the gift shop next to the large, limestone boulder. **(Map I)**

***Dichroa versicolor* (evergreen hydrangea)**

This hydrangea relative is semi-evergreen with dark green, deeply veined leaves. In late spring, large mopheads of petite buds open into masses of tiny, star-shaped blooms. In more acid soils, these flowers are the most incandescent of blues. Flowering continues through the summer. Come autumn, branches are weighted with pendulant clusters of miniature pink fruits that segue into metallic blue bb’s by late winter. **(Map J)**

***Loropetalum chinense* (Chinese fringe flower)**

This evergreen shrub is a witch hazel family member. Flowers arrive in a flurry in April and continue sporadically through summer and fall. Blooms are lurid pink or creamy white and characterized by a chaotic arrangement of narrow, twisted petals. *Loropetalum* is affectionately referred to as the “people’s choice” plant by our garden staff because it has become a favorite among visitors to the Portland Classical Chinese Garden.

The cultivar ‘Hine’s Purpleleaf’ has burgundy-colored foliage and is currently experiencing an unusually heavy flush of fall flower. **(Map K)**

***Vitis coignetiae* (crimson glory vine)**

Covering the eastern wall of the fragrance courtyard this non fruiting grape vine is living up to its common name. Acting as a lush green backdrop most of the year, in the fall its glowing red foliage warms the courtyard. The grape was brought to China in 128 BCE although it took until the Tang dynasty before the Chinese began making and drinking wine. **(Map L)**

***Poncirus trifoliata* 'Flying dragon'**

Flying Dragon is a very stout, dwarf, contorted form of *Poncirus trifoliata*, with twisted, bright green new growth and long, curved thorns measuring up to 4 inches long, lending the entire shrub a menacing appearance. Yet in flower, the fragrance of the large, white flowers draws one near. The species itself is a much-branched, small, deciduous tree with trifoliolate leaves. 'Flying Dragon' is slow-growing and is widely used as a dwarf understock for other Citrus species. A marvel at any time of year its crimson and yellow foliage make a fall a time of particular interest. **(Map M)**

***Bletilla striata* (ground orchid, white chicken)**

Time to pay homage to our Garden's Chinese name-- Garden of Awakening Orchids! This terrestrial orchid is very easy to grow in the Portland area. Native to China, Japan, and Korea, its distinctly pleated leaves are accented with scapes of delicate white or lavender flowers. The flowering has been completed for some time, yet the brilliant yellow of its fall foliage brings is a site to behold before they slip into a winter slumber. **(Map N)**

***Citrus ichangensis* (Ichang lemon)**

Hidden away under the two flowering plums on the east wall of the Scholar's Courtyard, the branches of this hardy citrus hang heavy with its green fruit. Sharp long spines ward off all but the most daring from its harvest. Its common name derives from its native range which includes the city of Yichang in China's Hubei province. Growing 5 to 8 feet tall, our specimen is reaching maturity. Historically the fruit has been used decoratively and for scenting rooms, as well as in the hybridization of hardier citrus varieties. This tree is the northernmost-growing Citrus and, along with the very hardy *Poncirus trifoliata*, is the hardiest of all citrus, surviving 6° F. **(Map O)**

***Impatiens omeiana***

Introduced in 1983 by Dr. Jon Jacobs of Georgia, this herbaceous perennial is a welcome addition to any deep shade area. The red and green foliage makes it a great contrast companion. In late fall, small bell shaped yellow flowers grace the plants growth tips. It was collected from Mt. Emei, in southeastern Sichuan Province, a place that has long been a favorite of plant hunters and Buddhist pilgrims. **(Map P)**

***Malus 'Prairifire'***

Chinese gardeners treasure the crabapple for its disorderly array of intertwining branches, a characteristic that is most easily observed in the winter months when these trees are bereft of leaves. Our specimens have fruited heavily this year and their bounty of red berries are contrasted by the yellow of its fall color. **(Map Q)**

***Persicaria microcephala* 'Red Dragon' (Red Dragon knotweed)**

'Red Dragon' is an herbaceous perennial with velvety, ovate leaves of intense wine-purple, dramatically marked with mint-green and silver chevron patterning. Stems reach 2 to 4 feet high and are wine-red. Delicate white flowers resembling baby's breath have begun to appear but will start to emerge more prolifically during August and September. In its wild form, it is found in several Chinese provinces, as well as Bhutan, northeast India, Nepal, and Sikkim. **(Map R)**

***Camellia* ‘Snow Flurry’**

This particular camellia is a very cold hardy hybrid parented by the species *Camellia oleifera*, a godsend to gardeners in more northerly climates who love camellias. Wonderful also because they bloom in the fall and early winter. Semi-double, crystal white flowers are exquisite against glossy, forest green foliage which resembles the leaves of *Camellia sasanqua*. The seeds of *C. oleifera* were pressed for oil in times past and for this reason the plant was once widely grown south of the Yangzi river in China. This camellia is perfectly content under the canopies of old shade trees. **(Map S)**

***Osmanthus x fortunei***

This well-loved Chinese garden plant is used to scent tea and flavor wine. It is associated with legends about the moon because it blooms at the time of the Chinese ‘mid-autumn’ or ‘moon’ festival. Look for tiny, white flowers accented by spiny, dark-green leaves. **(Map T)**

***Corydalis* sp. ‘Blackberry Wine’**

While not among plants traditionally found in Chinese gardens, this stunning herbaceous perennial makes an attractive groundcover in lightly shaded sites in our garden. As its name suggests, it has purple, narrowly tubular flowers of about an inch in length. Blue-green leaves are delicate and fernlike. Fragrant flowers appear in late spring and continue until mid-summer. After a short period of dormancy induced by the heat, flowers can be enjoyed again in autumn as temperatures cool. **(Map U)**

***Diospyros kaki* ‘Hachiya’**

Looking westward while standing on the Brocade hall terrace one cannot help but notice the bountiful fruit of our persimmon tree. This ebony-wood family member grows to 20 feet tall and is hardy to 10 F . Its fruit begins a limey green ,hidden away in late summer foliage, then welcomes fall with a warm orange to match its changing leaves. The fruit is only palatable when it reaches a mushy softness ,yet is well worth the wait. **(Map V)**

***Belamcanda chinensis* (blackberry lily)**

This deciduous perennial is a lily family member with a very iris-like appearance. In bloom, this plant sports bright orange flowers accented by maroon spots. The seed capsules split in the fall to reveal clusters of shiny black seeds that resemble elongated black berries. Our best planting resides under the persimmon at the west end of the Hall of Brocade Clouds terrace. **(Map W)**

***Osmanthus fragrans* var. *aurantiacus* (orange flowering sweet osmanthus)**

This well-loved Chinese garden plant is used to scent tea and flavor wine. It is associated with legends about the moon because it blooms at the time of the Chinese ‘mid-autumn’ or ‘moon’ festival. The variety *aurantiacus* is perhaps the most heavenly in terms of fragrance with tiny clusters of light orange flowers that make our mouths water with a scent reminiscent of warm apricots. **(Map)**

***Indigofera amblyantha* (Himalayan indigo)**

This deciduous shrub is native to the northwest Himalayas and produces a continuous flurry of pinkish-purple flowers from June through September. The blue-green leaves are composed of 13-21 tiny leaflets giving it that delicate, “sweet pea” appearance. Look for potted specimens at the base of the stairs on the Hall of Brocade Clouds terrace. **(Map X)**

# PLANT MAP



***As you leave, don't forget to check our plant sale area at the Garden's entrance. Buy a plant today and bring a bit of China's flora home!***

### ***Upcoming Horticultural Events:***

***Horticultural Tours*** – Tuesdays at 2:00 p.m. Take a stroll through the garden with Glin or Bill, our gardeners, and hear more about the Garden's world-class botanical collection.

For more details, visit [www.portlandchinesegarden.org](http://www.portlandchinesegarden.org) or call 503.228.8131.