

## 9 Lenten rose

HELLEBORUS X HYBRIDUS, ZONES 4 TO 9

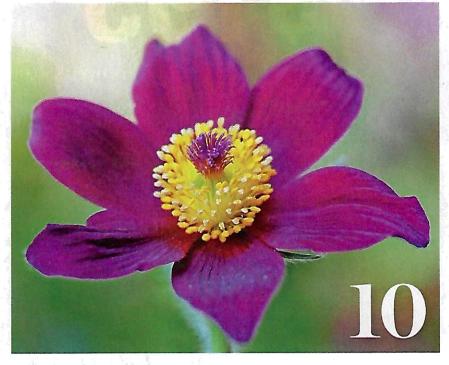
This sweet, simple-care favorite is perfect for the shadier spaces in your garden. Over time, this prolific self-seeder colonizes an area with robust evergreen foliage that's a crowd-pleaser all year long.

Why we love it: It's easy to want hellebore in all its striking colors: the almost black Midnight Ruffles, the burgundy-spotted pale petals of Rio Carnival and everything in between.

## **OTHER FIRST BLOOMERS**

Plant these options for extra spring beauty.

- Crocus
- Snowdrop
- Daffodil
- Hyacinth
- Pansy
- Creeping phlox
- Virginia bluebell



## 10 Pasque flower

PULSATILLA SPP., ZONES 4 TO 8

European pasque flower (P. vulgaris) usually boasts pale to deep purple petals but some red and white varieties are also available. The bright yellow centers draw the first pollinators of the season. P. patens is a native, found across the country, and has blue-violet flowers.

Why we love it: This rabbit-resistant charmer puts on one of the earliest shows in spring. The blooms are followed by attractive fuzzy seed heads that have a beauty all their own.

Jill Staake grew up with a forsythia bush outside her bedroom window. She watched the shrub closely each year for the first blooms of spring.