

Spring highlights for your region

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Spring classic: REDBUDS

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April 2020 NO. 192

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KEY PLAYERS

Here are some of the important plants that add interest to various parts of this garden.

1. Variegated purple moor grass

Molinia caerulea subsp. *caerulea*
'Variegata'

Zones: 3–9

Size: 12 to 18 inches tall and wide

Conditions: Full sun to partial shade;
moist, well-drained soil

Native range: Europe and Asia

A small clumping grass with green and creamy white variegated foliage. Tall, narrow, golden flowerheads emerge in summer and last well into fall, adding an airy, wispy texture.

2. 'Genii' hardy fuchsia

Fuchsia 'Genii'

Zones: 7–9

Size: 2 to 3 feet tall and 1 to 2 feet wide

Conditions: Partial to full shade;
moist, well-drained soil

Native range: Hybrid

The perfect plant to brighten a shady corner. Chartreuse, frost-hardy foliage is decorated with magenta- and purple-petaled flowers from summer to fall.

3. 'Spotty Dotty' mayapple

Podophyllum 'Spotty Dotty'

Zones: 6–9

Size: 12 to 18 inches tall and wide

Conditions: Partial to full shade;
well-drained soil

Native range: Hybrid of North American species

Prized for its bold, palmately lobed leaf that emerges chartreuse with burgundy spots in spring and transitions to kelly green with lighter spots in fall.

4. Sunset fern

Dryopteris lepidopoda

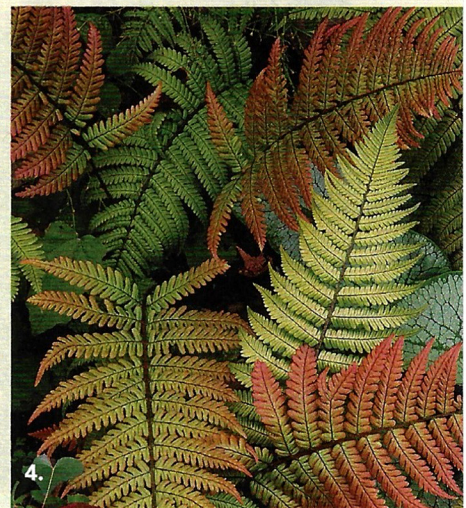
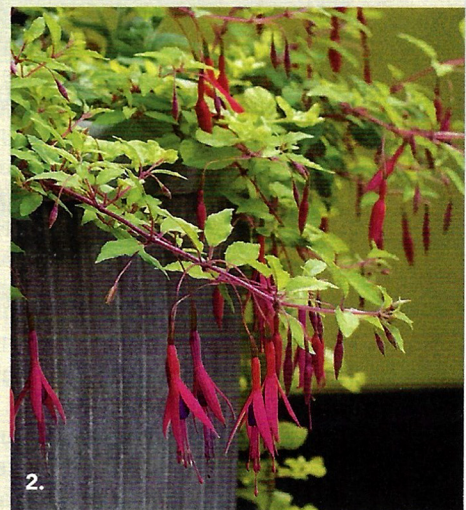
Zones: 6–9

Size: 1 foot tall and 2 feet wide

Conditions: Partial to full shade;
well-drained soil

Native range: Asia

An evergreen fern that delights year-round. New fronds emerge in melon shades of honeydew and cantaloupe in spring and mature to a deep olive green in summer.



yard, we carved a low arching wall into the upper edge of the slope to create a flat space and to define one side of a new paver patio just outside Kim's bedroom (bottom photo p. 68). The other side transitioned into a swath of flat lawn for play.

Kim was on board with my suggestion to turn the lower portion of the slope into a rain garden after learning that water would run down the back property line during heavy rains (top photo p. 68). Along the rear property line, in front of the new black chain-link fence for the dogs, we added a mix of shrubs, trees, and grasses. The mix of plant heights and foliage textures helps to hide the fence and add privacy.

Entertaining areas require exuberance

Around the corner to the opposite side yard sits a new "she shed" as the heart of the space (bottom photo p. 70). It provided the perfect opportunity to divide the area into two distinct rooms. The addition of container plantings that double as low walls and define the space led to the transformation of one side of the shed into an umbrella-covered seating area for social gatherings (top photo p. 70). On the opposite side, a table and chairs atop a low deck anchor a space for quiet dining next to a new pond in what was once an empty corner (photo p. 69). The shed's bright orange trim provided the inspiration for the citrus-themed color palette throughout the entire side garden.

Colors such as chartreuse and orange are naturally eye-catching in a garden. They're perfect for shady areas that need a spot of brightness or, as in the case of Kim's entertainment portion of the garden, for sections that are meant for lively social gatherings. However, it's important to balance these vibrant colors with plenty of calming shades of green in order to avoid a color riot. Each space has its purpose in the garden, be it relaxation or fun, and color has a major impact on how one feels when one is in that space. I love that Kim wasn't afraid to use color; it's a direct reflection of her outgoing, generous personality.

As we approach the exit to the street, one last treat awaits to the left of the third translucent gate, this one orange. In an homage to Kim's sense of whimsy and fun, a pair of oversize ceramic snails snack on a bed of shade-loving plants. It's a perfect send-off after making a full circle through her garden. Once overgrown and tired, the garden is now a refuge for rest and contemplation, gathering, and plain old fun.

Courtney Olander is a garden designer in Seattle.



southern plains

1. HINCKLEY'S GOLDEN COLUMBINE • *Aquilegia chrysantha* var. *hinckleyana*

ZONES: 5–8

SIZE: 2 to 3 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Partial to full shade; moist, well-drained soil

NATIVE RANGE: Texas

One of the best ways to welcome spring is with the bright yellow shooting stars of Hinckley's golden columbine. Early each year, beautiful little yellow spurred flowers dance above a mound of delicate leaves. When in bloom, this plant can reach up to 3 feet in height, making it perfect for floating above other shade lovers such as ferns and hellebores. Columbines like this one resent clay soils, which increase the chance of rot. After the bloom, the leaves provide an attractive mound of green texture to the bed. In warmer climates, this is considered an attractive evergreen for shady woodland gardens.

2. 'NEON LIGHTS' FOAM FLOWER • *Tiarella* 'Neon Lights'

ZONES: 4–9

SIZE: 16 inches tall and 20 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Partial to full shade; moist, rich, well-drained soil

NATIVE RANGE: North American hybrid

'Neon Lights' foam flower provides a double dose of beauty. The early spring leaves are stunning, with deeply lobed contrasting edges of neon green and deep, merlot-colored centers. Later in spring, flower stems covered with soft pink buds open into bright white, foamy racemes above the multicolored leaves. The bloom time can last up to six weeks, making it a perfect complement to evergreens and early spring-blooming perennials.

3. DOUBLE TAKE SCARLET™ QUINCE • *Chaenomeles speciosa* 'Scarlet Storm'

ZONES: 5–9

SIZE: 3 to 4 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; well-drained soil

NATIVE RANGE: China

This striking harbinger of spring always brings a smile to my face after the depressing brown tones of late winter. The dark red blooms are not the only benefit of Double Take Scarlet™ quince, however. The compact size, fruitlessness, and drought and heat tolerance make it a versatile plant for nearly any garden. It looks amazing in bloom whether planted in mass or as an accent in a border. Find a location with at least six hours of sunlight, lightly prune to shape after the spring bloom, and this plant will reward you with even more stunning scarlet camellia-type flowers the following spring.

4. SNOWCAP® INDIAN HAWTHORN • *Rhaphiolepis* × *delacourii* 'Corleyscourii'

ZONES: 7–10

SIZE: 4 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; moist, well-drained soil

NATIVE RANGE: Eastern Australian hybrid

Beautiful, lightly fragrant clusters of white blooms jump out from the dark green, leathery leaves of the Snowcap® Indian hawthorn in midspring. With a naturally round shape and compact size, this shrub can easily be used as an evergreen presence in foundation plantings, or as an accent in borders. As a bonus, the leaves turn a beautiful dark burgundy red in fall. It is generally listed as hardy to Zone 7; however, abnormal dips in winter temperatures can damage some hawthorns. In Zone 7, I prefer to use it against a building foundation for protection or on the south side of a border planting to prevent winter damage.



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Michelle Medlock is a landscape designer at Lawnovations in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

