

# Guide to plantings in Barbara Boggs Sigmund Park

This park was dedicated in 1991 in honor of Barbara Boggs Sigmund, who served as Mayor of the Borough of Princeton. The park was rededicated May 29, 2021.

This interpretive guide to plantings is provided by the Princeton Environmental Commission. The park is maintained by the Municipality of Princeton in partnership with the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Mercer County.

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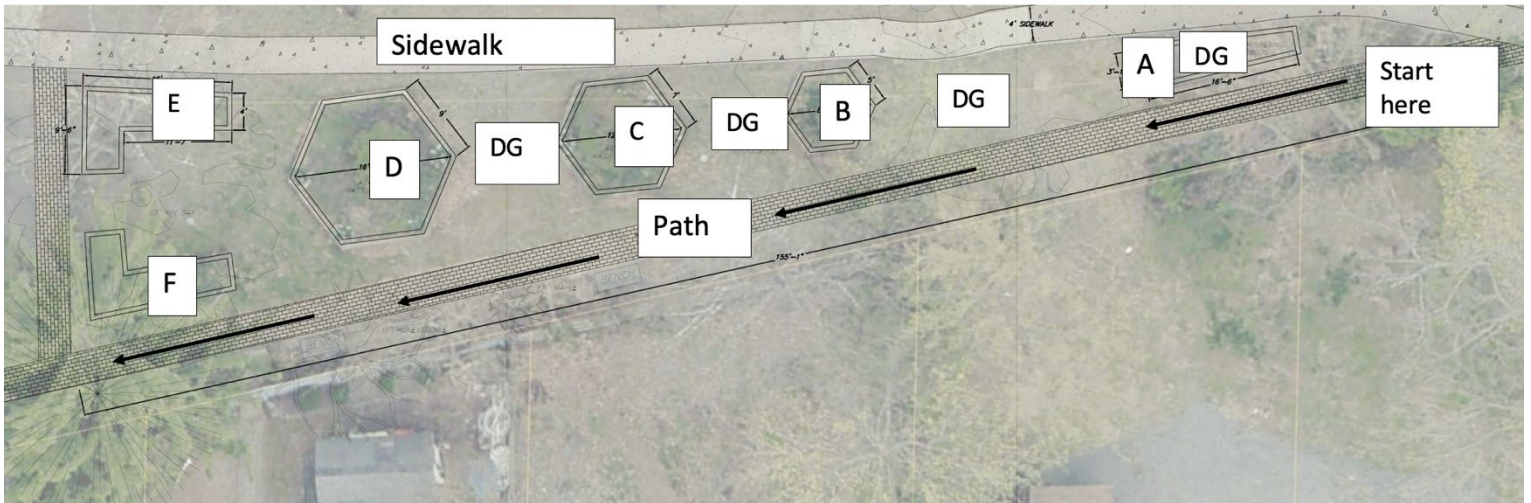


## How to use this guide

Follow the arrows on the map below. The guide begins at the plaque with Mayor Sigmund's name, furthest from the playground. Walk down the brick path, and at the end of the path return to your starting point and walk down either the sidewalk or the path to see descriptions of the plantings in the raised beds.

Many of the plants are labelled, thanks to the work of the Master Gardeners.

## Map of Barbara Boggs Sigmund Park



DG = Dogwood Tree

A,B,C,D,E and F are raised planting beds

## **Plants to your left, as you walk from the plaque towards the playground along the path**

### ***Morella pensylvanica* (Formerly *Myrica pensylvanica*) or Northern Bayberry or Candleberry**

*Morella* (or *Myrica*) *pensylvanica* or Bayberry is a big, bushy shrub which can grow to as large as 9 feet in height and width but is a slow grower. This shrub is native to the eastern United States and can thrive in sandy, dry soils. It requires full sun to partial shade, is salt-tolerant, and can grow in soils ranging from acidic to slightly alkaline. Because of its salt-tolerance, it is frequently found in coastal regions. The name “candleberry” comes from the waxy coverings on its berries, which can be used to make candles that have the same scent as the aromatic crushed leaves. In mild climates the shrub is evergreen, in colder regions it is deciduous (that is, loses its leaves in the fall). In spring, the plants have small, inconspicuous greenish-white flowers. The shrubs are dioecious, which means that male and female flowers appear on separate plants. If the flowers on the female plant are fertilized, they produce small, waxy berries which are an excellent food source for birds, and the shrub is a host plant for several varieties of moth. Depending on the season, you may be able to tell the sexes of these plants by examining either flower structure or by looking for berries. Seldom browsed by deer.

### ***Hydrangea quercifolia* or Oakleaf Hydrangea**

*Hydrangea quercifolia*, commonly called oakleaf hydrangea, is an upright, broad-rounded, multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub that typically grows 4 to 6 feet (less frequently to 8 feet) tall. It is native to bluffs, moist woods, ravines, and stream banks from Georgia to Florida to Louisiana. It is noted for producing pyramidal panicles of white flowers in summer on branches bearing large, 3-7 lobed, oak-like, dark green leaves.

The genus name *Hydrangea* comes from *hydros* meaning "water" and *angos* meaning "vessel or jar", in reference to the cup-like capsular fruit.

This plant is easily grown in organically rich, medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade. It thrives in moist soils and appreciates a summer mulch which helps retain soil moisture. Bloom occurs on old wood. Prune if needed immediately after flowering (little pruning is usually needed). Plants should be given a sheltered location and winter protection (e.g., mulch, burlap wrap) in USDA Zone 5, particularly when not fully established. (Princeton is in Zone 6b.) Plants can lose significant numbers of flower buds or die to the ground in harsh winters (temperatures below -10 degrees F), either impairing or destroying the bloom for the coming year.

### ***Cornus stolonifera* ‘Arctic Fire’ or Arctic Fire Red Twig Dogwood, Red-Osier Dogwood**

This compact selection of Red Twig Dogwood has dark red stems that provide a spectacular show in the winter sunlight. Unlike most *Cornus* that reach 8 to 10 feet tall, Arctic Fire grows to only half that height. Great in perennial shrub borders or used in flower arrangements. Cut vibrant stems for a dynamic addition to holiday arrangements. Full to part sun, moist soil.

### ***Hydrangea macrophylla* or Bloomstruck Hydrangea**

This is a “repeat blooming” hydrangea. The Endless Summer® Hydrangea series is the answer to adding repeat blooming hydrangeas to a landscape. With proper care, they will bloom from early summer to fall. The first flush of flowers in the early summer usually blooms on old wood; therefore, any necessary pruning should be done immediately after this first bloom. Flower buds will then form on new wood. As these blooms fade, deadheading is recommended to encourage more flower bud production. Flower color is determined by the acidity or pH of the soil. If the soil is more acid, the flowers will be blue in color, but in alkaline or basic soils, they will turn pink. If the soil pH is neutral (7.0), then the flowers will be purple. An advantage to planting these repeat blooming hydrangeas is that if there is a cold winter, it will only kill back the early flower buds. To keep Endless Summer® hydrangeas blooming all summer, it’s important to keep the plants properly watered. When it gets hot and dry, these cultivars will go into a hot weather hibernation and not repeat bloom, if not watered correctly. Plant hydrangeas in a location that has morning sun and dappled shade in the afternoon. It grows 3 to 4 feet tall and 4 to 5 feet wide.

### ***Hellebore* or Lenten Rose**

These perennials are related to buttercups and are not members of the rose family at all. They are hardy as far north as Zone 5 (Princeton is in Zone 6b) and are winter hardy. They bloom in late winter or early spring. They do best in moist, well-drained soil in partial shade. They can come into flower even before the snow melts, and their blooms are long-lasting. These plants are not favored by deer for browsing, making them a popular plant in the Princeton area! One thing to know is that all parts of the plant are toxic, and exposure to the leaves may cause a mild rash in some people.

### ***Hydrangea macrophylla* or Bloomstruck Hydrangea**

See previous description.

### ***Cercis canadensis* ‘Tennessee Pink’ or Tennessee Pink Redbud**

This small, graceful deciduous tree is a native species, typically found in open woodlands, thickets, woodland margins, and along streams and bluffs, often on limestone soils. It blooms before and as the leaves emerge, with rosy-pink, pea-like flowers that are borne in bunches of four to eight. The flowers are held close to the branches, and even bloom along the trunks, covering almost every inch in bloom. Trees may be trained to a single trunk or grow multi-stemmed. Eastern redbud has a flat-topped to rounded growth habit, and large heart-shaped leaves.

Fall foliage color is variable but can be an attractive bright yellow. Eastern redbud is in the legume (pea) family, so the fruits are brown to black pods typical of that family. While most members of the legume family can fix nitrogen from the atmosphere, eastern redbud lacks the nodules and bacteria necessary for that process.

This tree grows 20 to 30 feet tall and 25 to 35 feet wide, making it a suitable choice for small landscapes. It grows best in full sun to part shade and evenly moist, well-drained soils, but is adaptable to most soils if drainage is good. It is also tolerant of acid or alkaline soils. In our area, eastern redbud is hardy in southern New England, the mid-Atlantic states, and as far south as Georgia.

### ***Ilex aquipernyi* or Dragon Lady Holly**

*Ilex x aquipernyi*, or Aquipern Holly or Dragon Lady Holly, is a hybrid cross of *I. aquifolium* and *I. pernyi*. Aquipern Holly is an evergreen shrub to small tree, densely narrow and pyramidal in form, and grows up to 20 feet tall. Hollies are dioecious plants so both a male and female are needed to set fruit. *If the holly is in bloom, and you remember your high school biology, you may be able to determine the sex of this plant! Alternatively, look for berries in the fall. They will only appear on female plants.* This is considered a northern holly because it doesn't tolerate heat well. This plant may be used as a screen or hedge in a shrub border; its tall, narrow form makes it a great choice for vertical spaces.

This holly is tolerant of most soils except poorly drained ones and can be grown in full sun to partial shade. It is drought tolerant once established. Prune in the late winter to control its size if needed. It likes partial shade, especially in hot summers. It can grow in heavy clay and nutritionally poor or very acidic soils. This plant has no serious pests.

The fruit and evergreen leaves make for winter interest in the landscape. The spiny leaves make this a good choice for a barrier or privacy screen or use as an impenetrable hedge. It can also be planted as a specimen, used in small groups, or planted along a foundation. Mature plants do not tolerate root disturbance, so it is best to site the plant in its permanent position. It has no known diseases or pest issues, but it can be challenging to grow in the south because it dislikes hot summers.

### ***Sarcococca hookeriana* or Fragrant Valley Sweetbay or Sweetbox**

This broadleaf evergreen shrub is best grown in organically rich, acidic, moist, well-drained soils in part shade to full shade. Leaves lose luster in full sun and plants do best with consistent moisture. These shrubs thrive in our mid-Atlantic region. Prune in spring after flowering to maintain attractive shape. *Sarcococca hookeriana* is a low-growing shrub that reaches up to 2 feet tall and spreads slowly by underground stems to 6 feet wide or more over time in shady areas of the landscape. Lustrous, lance-shaped, leathery, dark green leaves are evergreen. Tiny, petalless, unisexual, tubular, fragrant, white flowers (1/2 inch long) bloom where the leaves branch from the stems in March-April. Female flowers give way to round, shiny, black fruits. This plant is not native, it comes from the western Himalayas and China. This variety, Fragrant Valley, was discovered in 2002 as a naturally occurring whole plant mutation of seedlings of *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis* by Gurjit Sidhu of Sidhu & Sons Nursery in Mission, British Columbia.

### ***Magnolia virginiana* or Sweetbay Magnolia**

The Sweetbay Magnolia has glistening dark green leaves with silver undersides that have a frosted appearance. The 2"-3" creamy white flowers bloom in May to June and have a light lemon scent. It is very elegantly shaped and is a good choice for a specimen or patio tree. Bright scarlet-red seeded fruit ripens in late summer attracting many animals, including gray squirrels, white-footed mice, turkey, and quail as well as a variety of songbirds including vireos, towhees, Northern flicker, and blue jays. The tree prefers moist, acid soil with sun to partial shade, and grows 10 to 20 feet high with equal spread. This native tree does well in our region and is a native of the eastern United States. It is a rapid grower, often gaining 1 to 2 feet in height per year under good growing conditions. It can tolerate occasional flooding.

#### **Perennials:**

In addition to Hellebores, Virginia Blue Bells, Bleeding Hearts, and Columbines are planted in this bed to the right of the path as you move away from the plaque. The blue bells (*Mertensia virginica*) are known as "spring ephemerals". This means perennials that grow, bloom, and wither away by the beginning of summer. So, to enjoy the blue bells, you need to visit the park in spring. Bleeding hearts (*Lamprocapnos spectabilis*) bloom in mid-to late spring, but unlike the blue bells, their foliage persists during much of the growing season. The columbines (*Aquilegia canadensis*), bloom in late spring and early summer. So, these four types of perennials, all natives except for the hellebores, provide a succession of bloom from early spring through early summer in the border running along this side of the park.

### ***Syringa reticulata* 'Ivory Silk' or Ivory Silk Lilac**

'Ivory Silk' is a Japanese tree lilac which grows well only in USDA hardiness Zones 3 through 6 (perhaps into 7, so not much further south than Virginia) and has an oval or pyramidal form when young but spreads to a rounded shape as it grows older. This is a very large shrub or small tree, reaching a height of about 20 to 30 feet with a 15-foot-spread. The huge clusters of creamy white flowers, borne in early summer for about two weeks, are the main ornamental feature but lack the fragrance of the spring-blooming lilacs—this lilac's fragrance is more suggestive of privet.

### ***Pieris japonica* 'Mountain Fire' or Lily of the Valley Bush**

Starting in March, Mountain Fire displays drooping chains of greenish white flower buds, then a profusion of pure white urn-shaped flowers appears in later in spring. The flower clusters resemble those of lily of the valley. This variety has fiery red new growth in the spring, which ages into a dark green later in the season.

This elegant and hardy broadleaf evergreen offers something for every season with its wonderful flowering and dark glossy-green laurel-like leaves. Forming a small, rounded shrub with a neat habit, Mountain Fire is an excellent addition to partially shaded areas of the garden.

This shrub prefers moist, acidic, well-drained soil. It works well in a border, in a container, or as a hedge. To have this shrub thrive and prosper, it should be planted in moderately fertile, humus-

rich, acidic soil; it may need protection in winter until established. The plant is very low maintenance once established and a year-round delight for the landscape. Although not a native, this plant is not considered to be invasive. Its leaves and flowers are toxic to humans if eaten.

### ***Weigela florida* ‘Bokraspiwi’ or Spilled Wine Weigela**

Weigelia is in the honeysuckle family and is native to North China, Korea, and Japan. It is a dense, rounded, deciduous shrub with somewhat coarse branches that tend to arch toward the ground as the shrub reaches maturity. For approximately two weeks each mid to late spring after the leaves emerge, showy rosy colored tubular flowers cover the shrub and have a repeat, though sparser, performance in mid to late summer. Plant this shrub in full sun to light shade, though the best flowering will occur in full sun.

When mature, older interior branches can be removed in late winter to improve the plants vigor and blooms the following year. This plant blooms on old wood, therefore, pruning is best done just after flowering as flowers appear on last season’s wood. If not pruned, branches will form a fountain-like outline which is highly ornamental while covered with blooms but over time it can take on a more a weedy appearance.

It is often utilized as a foundation plant, massed planting, or a shrub border. Many of the dwarf cultivars can be grown as container plants. Weigela is air pollution and clay soil tolerant and is slightly salt tolerant.

### ***Prunus laurocerasus* ‘Otto Luyken’ or Otto Luyken Cherry Laurel**

'Otto Luyken' cherry laurel is a compact evergreen shrub that grows 3 to 4 feet tall and spreads 6 to 8 feet. It is a dwarf form of English laurel and is not a native plant. This lush growing, compact, evergreen shrub offers year-round interest with glossy dark green leaves and showy, fragrant, creamy white flower spikes, followed by small black ornamental fruit. Dense foliage provides winter shelter for birds. Excellent as a hedge, background plant or privacy screen. Shade tolerant. The plants should be pruned after flowering if pruning is needed.

## Plants in the raised beds, as you walk from the plaque towards the playground

### Raised Bed A

#### Tree: *Cornus florida* or Flowering dogwood

Flowering dogwood is a woody, deciduous, flowering understory tree in the dogwood family that may grow 15 to 25 feet tall. It is native from southeastern Canada to eastern North America to eastern Mexico. The genus name comes from the Latin word for horn, *cornu*, most likely in reference to the tree's hard, dense wood. Flowering dogwood should be planted in a site that receives full sun to partial shade and in well-drained soil that is high in organic matter and has an acidic to neutral pH. A 2 to 4-inch layer of mulch will help keep the roots cool and moist in hot summers.

Despite the beauty of its spring blossoms, which appear between late March and mid-May, dogwood's glorious petals are modified leaves known as bracts. The durable blossoms last for three or four weeks, and the scarlet berries that follow them can linger into the winter, when they are most valued by wildlife. The dogwood's lustrous green summer leaves give way to brilliant scarlet fall foliage, and even in winter the dogwood's dark, patterned bark offers unique beauty. The dogwood is also distinguished by its broad natural range, and by being as at home in a natural forest as it is in the home landscape

In the bed surrounding the dogwood tree is a dense stand of **Lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*)**. This is not a true lily; it's a member of the asparagus family! The plant typically has medium green leaves that arch about 5 to 10 inches long and 1 to 3 inches wide from the center of a clump. It forms petite, fragrant, white flowers in the spring on long stems that rise from the leaf clumps, orange-red berries appear later in the fall. Don't let the delicate appearance of lily of the valley flowers fool you. This is a hardy ground cover that grows and spreads quickly. Lily of the valley will grow vigorously in almost any spot with some shade. In fact, gardeners commonly use it under trees where many other plants won't grow due to the shade. But you must be careful when planting it that it won't escape its designated bounds. Lily of the valley can quickly spread and overtake a large area. This plant needs little attention to thrive once it's established. Plan to water during dry spells. Also, if flowering has decreased on older plants, it's often beneficial to dig them up and divide them to refresh their growth. Replant them where they have some more space.

Also in this bed is a *Hydrangea macrophylla* '**Blushing Bride**'. Flowers are white with a pinkish tinge. It blooms from late spring to fall, and prefers part shade and rich, well-drained soil. Height is 3 to 6 feet. Native to Japan.

Three other flowering dogwoods grow in between the raised beds, one of these trees was recently planted in memory of Deb Mercantini, a municipal employee who worked with the Princeton Environmental Commission for many years.

### Raised Bed B

#### Perennials:

*Veronica* hybrid '**First Bride**' or Speedwell



This perennial blooms in spring, late spring, and into summer if old flowers are removed to encourage rebloom. Attracts bees and butterflies. Native of Europe.

***Leucanthemum superbum* ‘Becky’ or Shasta Daisy**

This perennial has large, classic, white, single blooms with yellow centers on a lush mound of coarse, leathery, green foliage. It is a wonderful, long-lasting cut flower. The sturdy flowers remain attractive even after a hard rain. Blooms from summer into fall. Excellent in sunny borders and in containers for patio or landscape accents. 2003 Perennial Plant of the Year. Native of Europe.

## **Raised Bed C**

***Pieris japonica* ‘Mountain Fire’ or Lily of the Valley Bush**

See previous description.

***Weigela florida* ‘Bokraspiwi’ or Spilled Wine Weigela**

See previous description.

***Spirea japonica* ‘Little Princess’ or Little Princess Spirea**

This low-growing deciduous shrub is a native of Japan. Flowers are light pink, and bloom from late spring into summer. Flowers attract bees

Perennials:

***Salvia nemorosa* ‘New Dimension Blue’ or Salvia**

This is a compact and bushy perennial which blooms in late spring. Flowers are an intense violet-blue and can last for weeks. This plant does best in full sun and in well-drained soils. It is trouble free, easy to grow, drought tolerant, and deer resistant. Attracts bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies.

***Stylophorum diphyllum* or Celandine Poppy**

The bright yellow flowers of *Stylophorum diphyllum*, commonly called celandine poppy or wood poppy, make a splash in spring and early summer. This herbaceous perennial in the poppy family (Papaveraceae) is native to moist woodlands of eastern North America, from zone 4 to 9. It is found in low-elevation deciduous forests from Ontario, Canada, and Pennsylvania south to Kentucky, north Alabama, and Georgia and west to Michigan and Missouri, typically in open woods at the base of bluffs, along streams, and in ravine bottoms with rich soils. The bright yellow to orange sap in the stems was used by Native Americans as a dye (and can stain hands).

## **Raised Bed D**

**White Azalea:** This plant is believed to be one of the few remaining original plantings from when the Barbara Boggs Sigmund Park was first established in 1991. Possibly the variety is *Delaware Valley White*. The Rhododendron family, of which azaleas are a part, prefer partial shade and while the show is spectacular when they flower in April and May, they maintain their evergreen leaves year-round, adding winter interest to the landscape. They cannot tolerate full, hot sun, nor can they tolerate being near trees in the walnut family, as they are sensitive to toxic chemicals produced by the roots of those trees, which are created to stunt the growth of other

plants around trees in the walnut family and thus discourage competition. At Barbara Boggs Sigmund Park, this is not a concern!

***Caryopteris x clandonensis* ‘Black Knight’ or Dark Knight Caryopteris or Bluebeard**

This plant is native to Asia. It is a bee and butterfly favorite in late summer, when often so many insects are present that the branches move as they land and take off. This low-growing, deciduous, mounding, small shrub grows 2 to 3 feet high and wide. It looks best planted in groups of 3 to 5 plants in well-drained soil or raised beds. Flower cluster colors range from violet to dark or light blue depending on variety. Bloom occurs from midsummer to frost. Flowers form on new wood, so the plants can be pruned nearly to the ground before spring growth begins. Trim off spent blossoms to prolong bloom. Prefers full sun and moderate water. The leaves emit a pleasant odor when crushed, and the plant is seldom browsed by deer.

***Hydrangea macrophylla* or Bloomstruck Hydrangea**

See previous description.

***Hydrangea macrophylla* ‘Variegata’ or Variegated Lacecap Hydrangea**

A handsome variegated hydrangea with bright green foliage surrounded by white margins. Produces lovely early summer blooms with rounded clusters of pinkish white flowers. Ideal for borders, accent, or mass plantings where it will add a splash of bold color to shady landscapes. Deciduous. Prefers moist, well-drained soil.

***Stylophorum diphyllum* or Celandine Poppy**

See previous description.

***Phlox paniculata* or Garden Phlox**

Fall phlox is a showy clump-forming perennial, reaching a height of 3 to 4 ft. The pink, lavender, or rarely white flowers are borne in a 4-8 in. wide, terminal cluster. The stem’s narrow, oval leaves are 4 to 7 in. long. Native from New York to Iowa and south to Georgia.

If found in the wilds beyond its natural range, this species has probably escaped from cultivation. The plant has been widely used as a medicinal herb; the leaf extract is used as a laxative and for treating boils. Many color forms are found in gardens. Regardless of flower color, garden phlox is attractive to hummingbirds and is a good selection for inclusion in a bird garden. This plant does best in moist rich soil, with full sun. Powdery mildew on the leaves is a frequent problem, especially in humid conditions and if the plants are not thinned to allow good air circulation.

## **Raised Bed E**

### ***Syringa sp* or Common lilac**

Like the white azalea, it is likely that this lilac was one of the original plantings in the park. Common lilac is a highly fragrant, spring-flowering shrub or small tree. It makes excellent cut flowers but after its spectacular mid to late spring bloom, the shrub is of little interest in the landscape with its leggy branches and leaves that are susceptible to powdery mildew.

Lilac does best in cold winter climates as they require a long period of winter chill for the buds to mature. Late frost will sometimes kill the buds, so it is best planted in a protected location. It is tolerant of different soil types but does not do well in soil that is highly acidic or poorly drained. It is native to open woodlands, rocky hills and scrubby areas in southeastern Europe, but has been widely cultivated throughout Europe (beginning in the late 1500s) and North America (brought over by colonists in the early 1600s).

### ***Clethra alnifolia* Sugartina ‘Crystalina’ or Summersweet**

Summersweet clethra (*Clethra alnifolia*) is a fantastic shrub with all-season garden interest. This native species, also called sweet pepperbush or summersweet, flowers profusely for 4 to 6 weeks during July and August when few other shrubs are in bloom, and the flowers fill the garden with their spicy fragrance. Summersweet is an upright shrub that typically grows between 4 and 8 feet tall and slowly spreads by sending up new shoots from rhizomes to form a small thicket. Smaller varieties like Sugartina combine well with perennials in the garden.

Sugartina is a dwarf variety that grows 30 to 40 inches tall and when in bloom is covered with 4- to 6-inch-long clusters of fragrant white flowers. It has a good yellow fall color. The flowers are attractive to bees and butterflies, and the resulting dark brown seed capsules attract birds during the autumn. Bloom time is July through August. Flowers form on new growth, therefore pruning can be done in winter. Because of its tolerance for moist soils, Clethra can be used for streambank erosion control. These shrubs sucker, which means they will slowly spread as new trunks emerge from the roots to increase the size of the planting. Clethra are also considered deer resistant.

### ***Hydrangea macrophylla* or Bloomstruck Hydrangea**

See previous description.

## **Raised Bed F**

### ***Hydrangea macrophylla* or Bloomstruck Hydrangea**

See previous description

### ***Phlox paniculata* or Garden Phlox**

See previous description, Bed D.

### ***Pulmonaria* or Lungwort**

Lungworts (*Pulmonaria* sp.) are recommended for part shade. Native to Europe and West Asia, these perennials feature beautiful and colorful spring blooms. Funnel-shaped flowers usually turn

blue once the pink buds open although flower colors of pink, red and white are not uncommon. However, the blooms finish up quickly and then the foliage comes into its own, adding wonderful color and texture with those silvery or mottled and spotted leaves in green and white. Typically reaching only 12 to 18 inches in height, the foliage of lungworts comes out of a rosette and it was the shape and spotting of the leaves (like a diseased lung!) that created interest in this plant by Medieval herbalists for its potential in treating lung ailments (no scientific basis!). Deer tend to leave the leaves alone. Hardy in zones 3-8, this perennial thrives in moist but well drained soil and has some drought tolerance once established. Hot and dry summers (or full sun) may compromise the foliage which can be trimmed back (“de-leafing”) to create a flush of fresh growth.

## **Acknowledgements:**

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Anne Soos  
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