

MATHER HOMESTEAD PLANTINGS
Plantings surrounding the Elizabeth W. Chilton Educational Center
Installed Fall 2020 by the Garden Club of Darien

The Garden Club of Darien selected plantings for the Elizabeth W. Chilton Education Center with considerations of sunlight, water, deer resistance, pollinator attraction, color, size and other growing conditions. Plants include Ilex, Viburnum, Spirea, and more. The Garden Club of Darien and Mather Homestead are grateful for the expertise of Ungemack-Mccool Landscape Associates, Inc. for their help with this project.



Botanical Names and Descriptions

NOTE: Darien, CT is located in U. S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) Hardiness Zone: 7A

Ilex glabra 'Gem Box' - (commonly known as Appalachian Tea, dye-leaves, evergreen winterberry, gallberry, and inkberry, pronounced: eye-lex GLAA-bra) is a species of evergreen holly bushes native to the coastal plains of eastern North America. As popular landscape plants, their berries often persist into winter and are striking against the snow. Female plants produce berries but male plants can be located up to 40 ft. from the female to enable berry production. *Ilex glabra* is most commonly found in sandy woods and peripheries of swamps and bogs, performing well in wet sites. The *Ilex glabra* 'Gem Box' is currently touted as the replacement for the more traditional 'Green Velvet' Boxwood, which tends to acquire disease more readily. The 'Gem Box' also keeps its dense foliage all the way to the ground and typically matures to 2-3 ft. tall and wide. It is normally cultivated in U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) hardiness zones 6 to 10. Inconspicuous greenish-white flowers appear in spring. If pollinated, female flowers give way to pea-sized, jet black "inkberries" which mature in early fall and persist throughout winter that are consumed by birds. Dried and roasted inkberry leaves were first used by Native Americans to brew a black tea-like drink, hence the sometimes-used common name of Appalachian Tea for this shrub.



Viburnum carlesii (commonly known as Korean Spice, pronounced: vye-BURR-num car-LEE-see-eye) is a species of flowering plant in the family Adoxaceae native to Korea and Japan and naturalized in Ohio, USA. It grows up to 6 ft. tall and 7 ft. wide in full sun to part shade (in USDA Zones 4-7) and is a bushy deciduous shrub with oval leaves that are copper-colored when young. This is one of the most handsome, gloriously fragrant shrubs known to man! The profuse, colorful and dense flower heads, measuring up to 3" across, produce white flowers in March-April, and the fragrance, which is a sweet, rich, spicy vanilla, attracts birds and carries a considerable distance across a lawn or garden. Viburnums prefer rich, evenly moist, slightly acid soil and generally flower in full sun. Viburnums do not tolerate drought.

well and usually need 3-5 years to start blooming and fruiting, growing about 12-24" per year depending on growing conditions. Prune if necessary after plants bloom in spring. The Latin-specific epithet *carlesii* refers to William Richard Carles (1848–1929), a plant collector in Korea.



Spiraea Tor (commonly known as Meadowsweets, pronounced: spy-RE-uh tor) sometimes spelled **spirea** in common names, and commonly known as **meadowsweets** or **steeplebushes**, is a genus member of about 100 species of shrubs in the family Rosaceae. All species are native to the temperate Northern Hemisphere, with the greatest diversity in eastern Asia. Spiraea Tor plants are hardy (USDA Zones 4-7S/W), deciduous-leaved shrubs, have a generous flowering habit (May-June), are generally deer resistant and can attract butterflies. Spiraea Tor grows to 4 ft. tall and should be spaced at 30" intervals. The leaves are simple and usually short-stalked, and are arranged in a spiraling, alternating fashion. Their many small white flowers are clustered together and have five sepals and five petals. Spiraea Tor thrive in full sun or part shade and in average soil types, however, supplementing soil with compost is a good idea. Initially, watering Spiraea about 1 inch per week is recommended, then keep the soil evenly moist. Fertilizing in spring to manufacturer's directions is recommended. Prune dead or broken stems in late winter or early spring. A light trim after the first wave of blooms often promotes a smaller second wave of blooms. A mature plant can be rejuvenated by cutting 1/3 of the oldest stems at their base each year for three years to promote new growth.



Pennisetum alopecuroides 'Piglet' (common name: fountain grass, pronounced: pen-nih-SEE-tum al-o-peck-your-oi-dees). From the Latin *penna* (feather) and *seta* (bristle) these cultivars provide graceful form, texture and color in the garden. Showy, silvery to pinkish-white, bristly, bottle brush-like flower spikes arch outward in late summer like water spraying from a fountain (hence the common name). 'Piglet' typically grows in a graceful, spreading clump to 18" tall and 24" wide. Narrow, medium to deep green leaves form a clump rising to only 8" tall. Flower stalks rise from the clump to 18" tall. *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Piglet' has fine, hair-like inflorescences, or plumes, and is from a widespread genus of more than 130 species of "ornamental" grasses. *Pennisetum* varieties are native to tropical and warmer temperate regions of the world and yield foliage during August - October and require little maintenance or water once established. Planted in Zones 5-9 and typically in borders in full sun to part shade and evenly moist/ average soil, the "tough" foliage typically remains for winter effects and trimming (to the ground) can be done in most varieties in late winter before the new growth emerges in the spring. "Rake out" dead leaves with gloved fingers, due to the rather sharp edged leaves. After the first growing season, a balanced fertilizer can be applied. The delicate seed bundles may attract birds and these grasses are generally deer resistant.



Pieris japonica compacta- (commonly known as compact Andromeda, pronounced: pie-AIR-us ja-PON-a-ka) is one of seven species of shrubs in the family Ericaceae. Deer and shade tolerant with evergreen foliage, Pieris japonica is native to southern Asia, China, Taiwan, Japan, eastern North America and Cuba where it grows in mountainous thickets. It is also widely cultivated in gardens and is considered a shrub with alternating, simple leaves on brittle stems. The showy, spiral, bell-shaped flowers are white, attract bees, and appear in early spring, lasting 2-3 weeks. The fruit is a woody capsule that releases numerous small seeds. ***The plant parts are poisonous if consumed by people or animals.*** The genus name derives from Pieria, Greece, the home of the Muses, according to Greek mythology. Pieris japonica shrubs are broad-leaved, growing to 3 ft.-12 ft. tall and 6-8 ft. wide and require moderate water and slightly acidic soil. This species performs well in foundation plantings or borders and pairs well with rhododendrons.



Dicentra eximia (commonly known as Fringed Bleeding-Heart) (pronounced: dye-SEN-tra EX-ah-mah) is a flowering plant with fern-like leaves and oddly shaped flowers native to the Appalachian Mountains. The old-fashioned Bleeding Heart has been a garden favorite for years. It bears long arching racemes of heart-shaped pink flowers and bloom in tight clusters at the top of leafless, fleshy stems. Bloom time in CT starts in early May and lasts several weeks, subsiding with the arrival of summer heat, when plants often go dormant. Seeds are born in a plump, pointed pod. They ripen to black while the pod is still green. Its seeds are prized by ants, which take the seeds to their nests to feed to their larvae. Dicentra eximia is best planted with its crown about 1" below an evenly moist/rich soil line in part to full sun (although flowering is best with morning sun and afternoon shade.) A 2" mulch top layer helps keep soil evenly moist, but avoid placing mulch right next to the plant's crown. Crown rot, slugs and snails (hand-picked off) will occur if soil is too consistently over-wet. Apply compost or general purpose granular fertilizer in the spring. Removal of old flower stems can promote possible blooms right up until frost. Prune out yellowing foliage throughout the season and after the ground freezes, cut back foliage to soil level and apply a winter mulch.



Clethra alnifolia "Sixteen Candles"- (commonly known as summersweet, pronounced: KLE-thra al-nee-FOH-lee-uh), is a deciduous species of flowering plant in the genus *Clethra* of the family Clethraceae, native to eastern and southern North America from southern Nova Scotia and Maine south to northern Florida, and west to eastern Texas. Its genus name comes from the Greek *klethra*, the name for alder of which the leaves resemble. It is a deciduous slow-growing compact shrub (3-8ft. tall x 4-6 ft. wide) requiring full to partial sun exposure, but tolerates shade and clay-like or wet soil. Ideally planted in slightly acidic soil as a foundation, hedge or rain garden plant, it is hearty in USDA Zones 3-9 and should be watered weekly or more during dry weather. The white showy candle-like flower spikes are dramatically tall, and have a sweet, somewhat cloying fragrance that are very attractive to bees, birds and butterflies. Bloom time is typically July-August. The oblong green leaves turn a lovely yellow-golden during the autumn. An all-purpose plant food can be applied periodically during the growing period to promote blooming. Promptly remove root suckers unless a more naturalized look is desired. *Clethra alnifolia* can be propagated by taking cuttings and should be pruned if needed in late winter.



Iris germanica (commonly known as German Bearded Iris, pronounced: EYE-riss jer-MAN-ih-kah). **Iridaceae** is a family of plants, based on the genus *Iris*, meaning rainbow, referring to its many color variations. Growing in USDA Zones 3-10, members of this family are perennials, with a bulb, corm or rhizome for their root system. The plants grow erect, and have sword-shaped leaves that are generally grass-like, with a sharp central fold. This genus dates from 1753, when it was coined by Swedish botanist, Carl Linnaeus. Its name derives from the Greek goddess, Iris, who carried messages from Olympus to earth along a rainbow and whose colors were seen by Linnaeus in the multi-hued petals of many of the species. Members of Iridaceae occur in a great variety of habitats. Most species are adapted to seasonal climates that have a pronounced dry or cold period unfavorable for plant growth and during which the plants are dormant. As a result, most species are deciduous. Iris can secrete large amounts of nectar and can be pollinated by bees, birds, butterflies or moths. Plant the rhizomes at soil level or lightly covered but not mulched (which leads to root rot). Don't overwater. Fertilize in spring and divide after flowering in mid/late summer. Blooming is best in full sun and well-drained soil and removing blooms after they fade is recommended.

