Spring in the Ten Broeck Mansion Gardens

Stroll through our historic landscape and discover nine spring plants that make our gardens special. Breathe deeply! Our gardens are the most fragrant with old-fashioned scents this time of year.

For families:

- Ask children to name the colors of the blooms they see. Which have a scent? Which do you like the best? Not so much?
- Which is the tallest of the plants below? Which is the smallest?
- Did you see any other creatures? Bees, birds, squirrels, chipmunks, or groundhogs? Our garden is an ecosystem: each insect and animal has an important role to play.
- What’s in a name? Did you know plants have a common name (in **bold**) and *scientific name* (in *italics*, written in Latin)? Common names vary from region to region, and often give a sense of local history. Scientific names help botanists keep the identities of plants clear.

1) **Primrose** (*primula*) one of the earliest garden plants, and enjoy light shade. They often appear in medieval tapestries, as one of the earliest cultivated flowers, and symbolize spring.

2) **Lilac** (*syringa*). A garden classic, first used in North America in the 1750s. They attract butterflies and their sweet purple blossoms appear in many Victorian poems.

3) **Columbine** (*aquilegia*) was one of the earliest garden plants, and appears in medieval paintings. It is now a common spring wildflower along roadsides.

4) **Catmint** (*nepeta*) is a deer resistant lavender-like flower, and re-blooms in the fall if cut back. Attracts pollinators – and cats like it too!
5) Iris – named for the Greek word for rainbow, refers to the many colors of this historic garden staple. This plant has the same scientific name and common name.

6) Wild geranium (*Geranium macrorrhizum*) is an excellent groundcover under our hawthorn trees, and a great example of how historic gardens used plant layering rather than mulches or artificial groundcover.

7) Hawthorns (*crataegus*) form an allée (line of trees) along our central garden path. A year-round favorite: the textured bark is interesting in winter, spring brings blossoms, and fall berries provide food for songbirds.

8) Lily-of-the-valley (*convallaria majalis*) is traditional in historic gardens and was often featured in bridal bouquets. Do you have family memories of this fragrant flower?

9) Solomon’s Seal (*polygonatum*) An easy-to-grow shade plant which attracts bumblebees. Hint: look for it in a shady spot over by the shade garden!

Did you know? Volunteers help care for our gardens. Join our Friends of the Ten Broeck Landscape to keep our gardens looking great. Please contact us to learn more and become involved.

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Albany County Historical Association

www.tenbroeckmansion.org
email: info@tenbroeckmansion.org
518. 436. 9826

Thank you for visiting our gardens today. Become involved: join as a member or volunteer.

*The Albany County Historical Association is a 501c3 nonprofit educational museum.*