

## Hellebores Again...

FEBRUARY 1998 by Joan Sargent

I know I have mentioned these wonderful plants to you before, but this is the time of year when I beg all of you with the right conditions to try them. The easiest and quickest to bloom in Foetidus. It's tall dark green leaves are divided into slender fingers. The pale bracts are effective even before they open their pale green bells. This plant looks good from Fall to Spring, not long-lived, it self-sows. A humus-rich soil, in partial shade suits it well. *Helleborus niger*, the so-called Christmas rose is blooming now, its evergreen leathery leaves are sheltering single stems of white flowers. It does not like acid soil, so I give it a dusting of lime and grow it in shade near the foundation of the house.

The *Orientalis* hybrids are easy to grow but may take a year or two to settle down. Then you will have clumps three feet around with dozens of flowers in April. While you are waiting, the foliage is striking, evergreen and a good companion to early bulbs. We have samples of all these at Lee Garden. None of them like drought conditions and you need to cut off the old foliage, but under trees and in front of shrubs, with small-leaved or needled greens, they give real distinction to any planting.

Ed. note:

*We have tried to find photos of each for reference.*

**Joan Sargent**, a longtime member and master gardener who passed away in August; wrote about 24 gardening columns through the years for our newsletter.

*We are reprinting them again.*



*The two Hellebores above are part of the new Lee Garden Note Cards, that are available with photographs from Lee Garden. There are 2 different sets: Woodland Wildflowers, and Spring Azaleas. Sets are \$12.50 (each set has 5 different photos), contact Peggy Dannemann or Yvonne Hunkeler to purchase. They will be available at February and March programs and at Tablescapes. Makes a great gift.*

*From top: Helleborus hybrid Green, Helleborus hybrid, Lenten rose. Taken by Betsy Sammarco, NCBL member, Lee Garden volunteer.*

*Bottom: H. Lenten rose, amid bloodroot and daffodils.*

*All 3 photos taken in Lee Garden.*

