

## Proven Choices

FEBRUARY 2000

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society puts out a quarterly magazine called Green Scene [now called GROW]. Every year, in its Fall issue some nurserymen pick out shrubs and trees that they think are underused by homeowners and nominate them for the Styer Award. Three of the winners this fall I already have, Parrotia, I wrote about in December. (inserted below)

**Parrotia persica**, a native of Iran, and a member of the Witch Hazel family makes a wide, arching shrub and also has the interesting bark. The good green beech-like foliage starts turning color in the late summer, each leaf seems to be different with yellow, red and orange colors making it one of the most colorful trees I know.

**Aronia arbutifolia**: Brilliantissima, the red native chokeberry has white flowers, good summer foliage, profuse berrying, and great fall color. It grows about as wide as it is tall, mine are 6 feet, it will get a bit leggy so looks best behind a smaller plant, such as **Itea virginica**, another native that would be a good choice. It does well in sun or shade, deer don't eat it, and the birds leave the berries alone for most of the winter.

**Syringa meyerii 'Palibin'** the little leaf Lilac with no mildew, is smaller and more compact than the rest of the family. Wonderfully fragrant, its violet flowers appear in the spring and fall. For unknown reasons this plant can be hard to find, accept no substitutes, and keep looking.

The new **Weigelia** they like is **Alexandra's Wine and Roses**. This one has dark wine colored leaves and rose pink flowers, good for fall color and a must for hummingbirds.

They also tell us about a new rose for 2000. We should be looking out for '**Knockout**' rose from Star. Extra disease resistant, the foliage is uneaten by beetles or other insects, no dead-heading, continuous blooms, ample hips in the fall with foliage turning the color of eggplant! It's the All American Rose of the Year and has cherry red blooms. In my long life I have yet to come to the conclusion that if something is too good to be true, I better stay away from it, but this spring I might just be tempted to take a chance on this one.

*Joan Sargent, a longtime member and master gardener who passed away in August 2012; wrote about 24 gardening columns for NCBL through the years for our newsletter. We are reprinting them again.*

From top, clockwise:

Parrotia persica in fall colors;  
Aronia aka Red Chokeberry, tolerates both wet and dry soil;  
Weigelia Alexandra's Wine and Roses;  
Syringa meyerii 'Palibin' the tiny Lilac;  
'Knockout' Rose, which certainly did prove to be a winner!; and Itea virginica.

