

## Winter Interest

DEC. 1999 by Joan Sargent

Two small trees I bought as whips from a mail order nursery years ago have turned into such stars of my late summer garden that I thought I would bring them to your attention. I hope that some of you will want to give them a try. Both are undemanding, good for sun or shade, and I see them used either as specimen plants at a condominium, as a background in a shrub border or with evergreens. They both are multi-stemmed and could be considered shrubs or trees.

**Haptacodium micinoides**, the seven son flower was introduced from China about ten years ago. It has been awarded the prestigious medal of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. It becomes interesting in the late summer when clusters of white, fragrant flowers appear at the end of each branch. Bees are mesmerized by this one and when the flowers drop, bright red calyxes remain showy for weeks. They are great for using in flower arrangements. A mature tree has shiny, exfoliating bark and so is interesting to look at all year. I have one near a tall Miscanthus with red seed heads and a Callicarpa with its purple berries that come late in the fall and are not eaten right away by birds.

**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. There is a weeping variety that I have not seen.

Neither of these small trees needs pruning, extra watering once they are established, or fertilizing. Twombly's and Oliver's both have them and suggest using them as a small hedge, what a great idea. I have had no nibbling on mine by deer and consider them both gems. Try them, you won't be sorry.



Haptacodium micinoides, white blooms lead to showy red calyxes.

*Photos right:*

Parrotia persica, the tree in Fall color, the flower and close up of leaves.



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