

January 24, 2023

You have to look a bit harder at this time of year, but yes, you can find plants blooming in January on the Cathedral Close. Climate change is not the only reason for this phenomenon. There are species whose flowers appear well before spring, although warmer weather does encourage them to bloom even earlier.

The following plants are now showing blooms (during the last week of January, 2023).

***Jasmine nudiflorum*, Winter Jasmine**

Winter jasmine is a medium-sized, fountain-like, deciduous shrub that grows up to 4 feet tall. If it is grown as a vine, it will reach a height of 10 to 15 feet tall and 3 to 6 feet wide. It has long arching branches and willowy stems.



In January or February, bright yellow tubular or funnel-shaped blooms appear before the leaves have emerged. They are typically the first flowers to bloom in the landscape. The shrub makes a dense green mound during the summer.

This plant is native to Southeastern Tibet to Central China. In China, this plant is often called “Yingchun” which means “flower that welcomes spring”. It can be found in several locations on the Cathedral Close. There are mass plantings of Winter Jasmine near the entrances to the Cathedral’s parking garage - where it cascades over the walls.





***Helleborus orientalis*, Lenten rose**

Hellebores are special because they bloom when little else is in flower – typically in very early spring when most perennials have yet to start growing. Although the flowers and leaves may droop after a snowfall, they soon recover.



There are about 20 species of hellebores that inhabit Europe and Asia. The leaves tend to be evergreen throughout the year and plants bloom for almost two months before the flowers begin to fade. Although many hellebores have nodding, cup-shaped flowers, some cultivars have upward-facing blooms.

There are hellebores now blooming in the Bishop's Garden. You may need to look closely to see the blossoms since they are downward-facing and can be hidden by the foliage.





***Galanthus nivalis*, Common Snowdrop**

Snowdrops are early blooming perennial spring bulbs in the amaryllis family (Amaryllidaceae). There are only a dozen cultivated species, mostly native to the deciduous woodlands of Europe and western Asia. The name *Galanthus* comes from the Greek *gala* (= milk), and *anthos*(= flower), referring to the color of the flowers and providing another rarely used common name of milkflower.



These are small plants so they look best when planted in groups. You can find plantings of snowdrops on the east side of the Cathedral (behind the apse), in the Olmsted Woods, and in the Cathedral Garth.

***Cyclamen coum*, Persian Violet**

Hardy Cyclamen is a perennial that is suited to woodland and rock gardens with delicate, rose-pink flowers bloom in early spring. It grows three to six inches tall with medium green, small heart shaped leaves that have silver-white patterns. Originating mostly from lands bordering the Mediterranean, several species are perfectly hardy in areas without a prolonged winter freeze. It then goes dormant during the warmer months.



You can find Cyclamen in the Bishop's Garden between the Hortulus and the Norman Court.

***Camellia japonica*, Japanese camellia**

Japanese camellia is an evergreen woody shrub or small tree in the Theaceae (tea) family. Native to China, Korea, and parts of Japan, it has become a southern gardening favorite. The genus name *Camellia* is derived from Georg Josef Kamel (1706), a Jesuit missionary and naturalist who introduced Philippine flora to Europe.





Flowering may start as early as October and finish as late as mid-March. The flowers on each plant will usually last three to four weeks. You can find a beautiful camellia blooming in the Cathedral Garth's All Souls Memorial Garden.