



Harmon Yard Wins Honors

The Holden Beach Beautification Committee has chosen the yard of Dan and Rachel Harmon of 228 Ocean Boulevard West as yard of the month for October. Pictured with the Harmons (at left) is beautification committee representative Janie Steorts.

They May Not Be Cherry Trees, But..

Dear Plant Doctor: Can you suggest an easy-to-grow small tree or tree-shaped shrub to replace a Japanese cherry tree that has died?

It has been growing (but not very well) at the end of a perennial border with daylilies, lythrum, boltonia and stokesia.

I need a replacement that gives only light shade. The site is well-drained and gets full sun all summer, part sun in spring and fall and is completely shaded all day in winter by a house and tree next door.

I enjoy reading your column in the newspaper and I especially appreciate your advice about plants that grow well in this area.

Answer: Thanks for the accolades!

The fall is an excellent time for planting trees and shrubs. I commend you for taking advantage of this beautiful weather to beautify your garden.

As you have discovered, Japanese cherry trees can be difficult to grow in our area. They are susceptible to many disease and insect problems confounded with the fact that bloom is often irregular and meager.

However, I know of no small tree that would truly substitute for the beautiful flower display of a healthy Japanese cherry in the spring.

I will suggest several beautiful small trees that I know will thrive in the coastal plains of North Carolina with minimal care. Most of these should do well in your backyard and fit your landscape requirements.

A beautiful spring bloomer that forms a small tree is the Saucer Magnolia (*Magnolia soulangiana*). There are more than a dozen cultivars available in the nursery trade which vary greatly in flower color,

THE PLANT DOCTOR

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Extension Area
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plant height and growth habit. The Star Magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*) should also be considered.

A favorite of mine is the Cornelian cherry Dogwood (*Cornus mas*). This is the earliest bloomer of all the dogwoods. Small yellow flowers clustered around the stem nodes offer color to the landscape when all else is drab and colorless.

Another dogwood that does extremely well in this area is the Kousa Dogwood (*Cornus kousa*). Although the Kousa dogwood blooms later than the Eastern Dogwood, the beautiful smooth whitish bark, dark foliage and stark white flowers make a small tree with superior pest resistance and drought tolerance.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the "king" of eastern North Carolina spring bloomers, the Eastern Dogwood (*Cornus florida*). More than 125 cultivars are available in the trade. I especially favor the double-flowered cultivar "Plena".

The native Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) is difficult to beat for early spring color (red to spring blooms) and resistance to insects and diseases. A new white-flowered cultivar developed by Dr.

J.C. Raulston at N.C. State University is getting into the nursery trade and should be available this year on a limited basis.

If you want something that is a bit unusual, you may want to investigate the Franklin tree or Franklinia (*Franklinia alatamaha*). A native American tree, it was discovered by John Bartram along the Altamaha River in Georgia in 1770 and named for Ben Franklin. The tree has not been seen in the wild since 1790. This small tree produces white, fragrant flowers three inches across in July and beautiful orange-red foliage in the autumn.

Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis sp.*) is another beautiful and well-adapted early bloomer. The fragrant yellow to red flowers bloom in the dead of winter in this part of the country. This plant does well in moist, wet areas in which most plants will drown. Dozens of cultivars are available in the nursery trade.

T.G. Ranney and K.A. Powell of N.C. State University's Horticulture Department published in May 1991 an excellent work entitled, *Recommended Trees for Urban Landscapes: Proven Performers for Difficult Site*. Horticulture Information Leaflet No. 617.

These pros recommend a list of more than 40 species of trees. The leaflet describes hardiness, mature height, form and stress tolerance and offers various other comments concerning landscape trees.

You may obtain a copy of this publication free from any North Carolina Extension office or by sending an SASE to me.

(Send your gardening questions to The Plant Doctor, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia, N.C. 28422.)



PHOTO BY PAT O'LEARY

October Yard Well-Groomed

Carolina Shores Garden Club presented its October Yard of the Month award to Walter and Joanne Gould, 10 Sunrise Court, Carolina Shores, Calabash. Their well-groomed green lawn is landscaped with an attractive selection of nandinas, yaupon hollies, Burford hollies and azaleas. Potted plants and a hanging basket of impatiens provide colorful accents.

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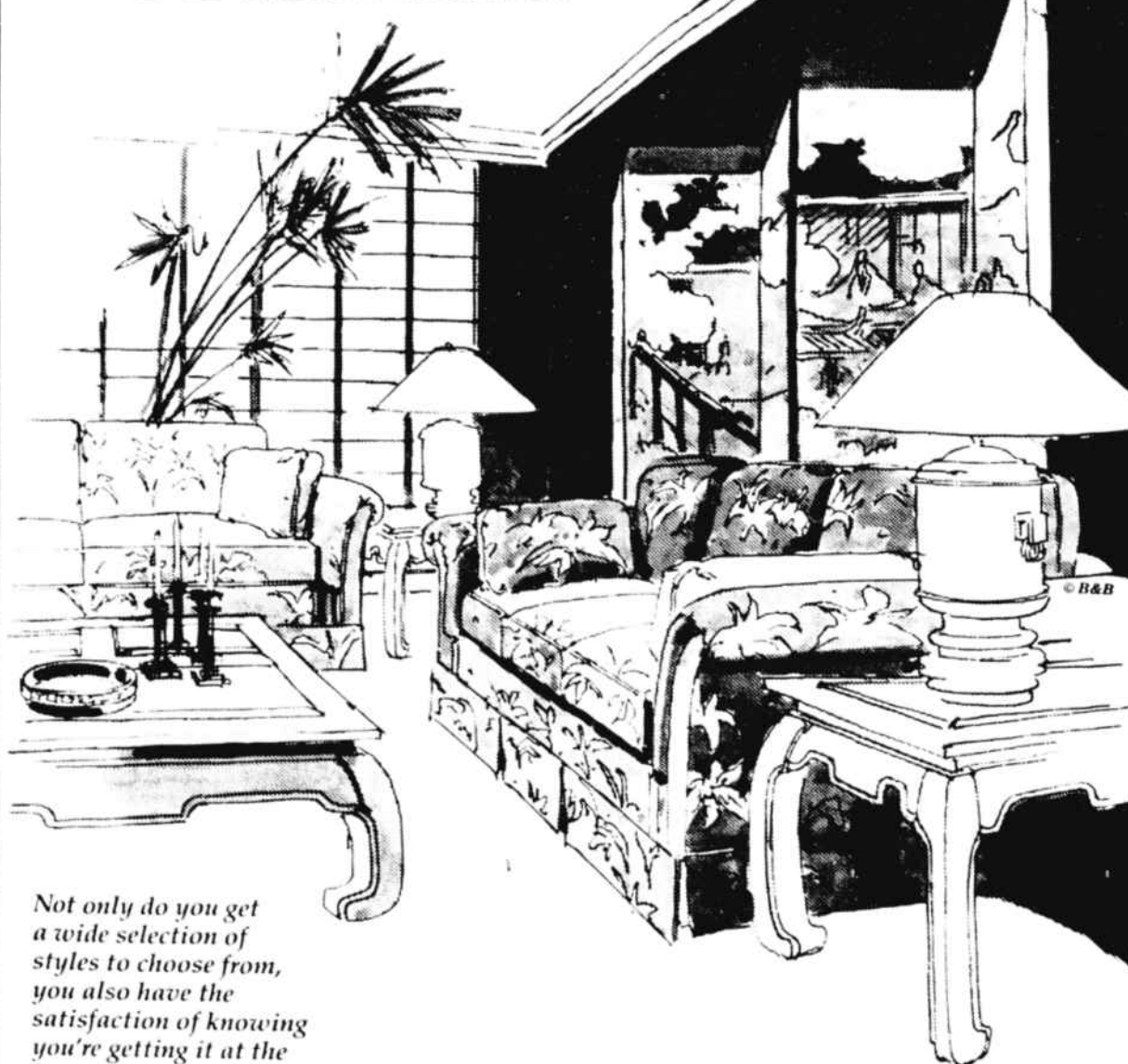
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