

The First Flowers of Spring

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ONE of the first plants that bloom in spring is the Christmas Rose, *Heliborus Niger*, probably named Christmas Rose from the fact that it blooms in the south of England about



White Rock Cress

Christmas. In Queen Victoria Park, Niagara Falls, last year, the plant was in bloom from November to April.

Another plant that blooms here in the month of April is *Daphne Mezereum*. This is a shrub that grows to five feet high and flowers before the leaves appear. It bears many violet-purple flowers, on brown, erect stems. The fragrance of these flowers is exquisite during the morning and evening. Many passers-by enquire where the fragrance comes from. *Daphne Mezereum* is a rare wildling in Ontario and even in America, but on the Dufferin Islands, in the Niagara river, it grows as underbrush. During the fall, it is covered with showy scarlet fruit about the size of peas. There is a variety of the same that produces white flowers and fruit; otherwise, they are similar. Both of these shrubs should be hardy in many parts of Ontario, particularly if grown from the seed. Another of this type is *Daphne Cneorum*, a dwarf, spreading, evergreen shrub, called by some "The Garland Flower." This is a choice subject growing by itself, or as a border to a bed of shrubbery. It produces flowers in abundance of a light lilac color during spring and fall, and fills the air with a most delicious fragrance.

Hepatica tribola and *Hepatica acutiloba* are native plants, better known by the name "Liver Leaf." They bear beautiful, deep blue flowers. They well deserve employment, particularly in well-shaded spots in the rockwork. Their leaves are evergreen. These plants are the first to bloom in the open.

The common crocuses and the snow-

drops are well known to all lovers of flowers. They are among the first plants to bloom, starting early in April.

Among the first to bloom in the open is the English Daisy, *Bellis perennis*. It is as common as the dandelion in the grass in the park. The next plant to bloom with us is the sweet purple English violet.

The foregoing are all the plants that bloom here during April, but May produces new-born flowers every day. I go around my beds and borders every evening to see and admire the new-born faces that seem to smile at me. It is needless to say that I smile in return I am so glad to see them, and to know that they have pulled through the winter so well. But it is a very difficult task to remember their proper names.

Cowslip, *Primula officinalis*, is a plant seldom seen in gardens; yet, its beauty and associations naturally make it valuable. It seems to stand our cold



Purple Rock Cress

winters and hot summers well. It is supposed to be the parent of the majority of our varieties of Polyanthus.

Farther north, where it would not be safe to plant greenhouse plants in beds before the middle of June, primrose, polyanthus and cowslip are grand subjects to plant in the beds in the fall to bloom in the spring, as they would be done blooming before the beds are required for the greenhouse stock. The primula is none the worse of being divided and transplanted. It is excellent for growing in out-of-the-way places during summer, and again planted into beds in the fall to bloom again the following spring. Such beds are much more beautiful and valuable than gaudy tulip beds, the bulbs for which have to be bought every fall. The plants should be hardy in many parts of Ontario. The flowers might require a little protection sometimes, when there was a likelihood of frost. The primula is to England and Scotland what the gentian is to

the Alps, the sweetest and most-sought-after flower.

During May and the fore part of June, White Rock Cress, *Arabis albidia*, and its double form play a very prominent part. They are the brightest gems in the garden. If a border or edging is made of them, it will be found that the season of bloom is very much lengthened by planting the single and double turn about in a row, as the one is done when the other begins to bloom. After both are done blooming, they may be trimmed back short, and sweet alyssum may be planted between the plants of *Arabis* to keep up the display of white for the rest of the season. *Arabis* makes a grand rock plant; the accompanying photograph will show how well it is suited for this purpose.

Purple Rock Cress, *Aubretia Hendersoni*, is in bloom at the same time as the white, and makes a grand show of purple. With the exception of the color, the plants are very similar. This is also a grand rock plant.

Adonis davorica flore pleno is a rare and beautiful low-growing plant, very hardy, producing double flowers three inches across, green and yellow in color. The plant has finely cut leaves. It grows 15 inches high and is a gem for the rockwork.

Barrenwort, *Epimedium alpinum*, is a dainty plant, growing 18 inches high. The foliage is neat and almost evergreen. It produces airy clusters of purplish and yellow flowers of quaint shape. A good place for it is among the rocks or in a clump by itself, where it could be seen to better advantage and its charms protected.



Leopard's Bane

A plant that is not often seen is Noble Tumitory, *Corydalis nobilis*. This is one of the finest ornamental herbaceous plants. The flowers appear in large heads on large, strong stems, and are of a rich, yellow color. The plant dies down to the ground soon after flowering. It is a native of Siberia, consequently