

Snowdrops

MARCH 1998 by Joan Sargent

Anything that comes out early in my garden is more welcome than a perfect June rose. Many of you probably grow *Galanthus nivalis*, the common snowdrop. My favorite is *Galanthus elwesii*, sometimes called Giant Snowdrop. It blooms earlier, is taller and good for cutting. It doesn't naturalize as well as *nivalis*. Snowdrops can be hard to get started from fall bought bulbs, so we give our Lee Garden volunteers clumps as starter sets. The Winter Aconite, a tiny bright yellow flower, blooms at the same time and is equally hard to get started. Again, Lee Garden has two large stands of it, so we spread them around among friends. A companion I like for them both is *Arum italicum* 'Pictum'. The large pointed leaves arrive in the Fall, dark green, heavily veined for a while, they disappear in early spring and leaving behind spikes of red berries. They are perfectly hardy and the clumps grow larger every year. Use some leaf mold in the planting holes and as much mulch around the plants. Plant them in part shade and you will have something to enjoy in February!

Ed. note:

We have tried to find photos of each for reference.

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.

Below: Galanthus elwesii, Giant Snowdrop.



Top photo: Galanthus nivalis. Above: Winter Aconite.

Below inset: Arum italicum seeds heads in spring.

Below: Leaves of A. italicum in the fall.

(It emerges in fall and fades away in summer). Small flowers appear in spring, cloaked in a yellowish green spathe, and then form bright orange-red berries by summer, then plant is gone. Good companion for Hosta after it withers away.

