

With Joan Sargent

NOV. 1995 by Joan Sargent

A useful book, first published in 1968 after a seven-year drought, was 'Easy Gardening with Drought Resistant Plants' by Nehrings of Massachusetts (sadly I suspect it is out of print). It reads, "water today can be a major gardening problem" and "the best insurance against such devastation is to increase the water retentiveness of the soil, choose your plants carefully and use water more effectively."

"Nail-biting time will begin in early spring and it won't end until summer. Only then will we know what is dead, what weakened and what came through with flying colors. You may need to do some heavy pruning and light feeding then-- but not now. You will also need to move and replant and remember to look for the right plant for the right place." And so to bed for the long winter months, hoping for plenty of snow melt in the spring.

[Ed note: upon googling the title and author, Abebooks.com has 1 copy for 2.99!]

Joan Sargent Talks About The Lull

DEC. 1995 by Joan Sargent

There is something satisfying about November into December. The last tulips are in the ground and most of the year's work is done. A bit of tidying up perhaps, but I leave more and more of this for spring. The fall rains have been plentiful and many plants look fresh again. The foliage of the hardy geraniums takes a back seat during the summer but is now coloring up very well. fresh spotted leaves are on the Pulmonarias, new sharp green growth brightens the Hellebores and tiny pinkflowers of Cyclamen hederifolium are ready to be picked with their mottled leaves. All these, as well Epimedium, Heuchera and Iberis, are excellent foliage plants holding their leaves for most of the winter. Arum Italicum Pictum, which spends its summers underground but pops up again in the fall, is my favorite variegated plant. Its arrow-shaped leaves have creamy veins - really a great plant for cutting for flower arrangements.

Leslie Pierpont reports that her two-year old Camelia is in bloom. These new hybrids are hardy to 20 degrees F. They make large evergreen shrubs and need the same conditions as azaleas -- acid soil high in organic matter, good drainage and, as they are shallow-rooted, need watering in dry weather. For those of you interested in something new, here is one to try. They are available as small plants from Roslyn Nursery, Long Island, NY.

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.

Photos top to bottom: Cyclamen hederifolium; Pulmonaria saccharata; Arum Italicum Pictum with red seed head; Heuchera tiramisu; Epimedium grandiflorum.

