

---

# SUNNYSIDE THYMES

---

Volume 30, Issue 4

“Helping Others Grow”

April 2021

---

## A Gardener's Wish List

By Bonnie Cummings, SMG Member



For this month's adventure in garden dreaming, I have chosen three selections from the Theodore Klein Award winners. Each year a list is published and I have opted to choose these three from separate years and for separate environments.

From 2015: American Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), a native deciduous shrub or small tree, got the nod to be included on the list for several reasons. It is listed as a native alternative to the invasive Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*), is the host plant for the Spicebush Swallowtail butterfly and can be grown in a variety of soil conditions, and hardy in Zones 4 to 9. If it is showy blossoms you are seeking, however, look elsewhere! The Spicebush is a member of a group of plants, like hollies, known as dioecious, that have the sexes on different plants and while both produce flowers, only the female will produce fruit. Neither flower is showy and it is difficult to tell which plant is female until the small red fruits form in late summer. In semi shade, the plant will keep more to a bush size (8 to 10 feet) but in full sun can grow to 20 feet. If bought in a nursery, the sex should be already identified and you will need one of each if you seek to produce fruit. If, however, you are looking to provide a home for the larvae of the Spicebush Swallowtail butterfly, either will do! When the butterfly larva produces a cocoon, the chosen leaf will curl and is easily identifiable.



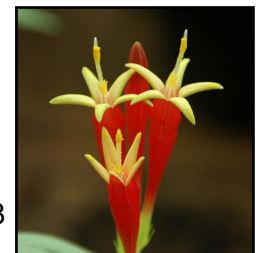
American Spicebush

From 2016: Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) is another deciduous native shrub found readily in the wild along stream edges and less often in cultivation, although its role as a pollinator plant is making it more sought after. It does best with wet conditions in the spring and dry conditions the rest of the year. It grows 3 to 6 feet high and occasionally to 15 feet. The showy blossoms resemble prickly cotton balls, are white, last a long time and attract bees of all sorts. The fruit is rounded, nutlike and persists through winter.



Buttonbush

From 2011: Indian Pink (*Spigelia marilandica*) is a native perennial wildflower found throughout the southeast. It is 18 to 24 inches high and thrives in moist shade, is hardy in Zones 5 to 9 and attracts hummingbirds. The vibrant red flowers, which appear in June, are tube shaped with a bright yellow interior making them ideal for a hummingbird's long tongue. Indian Pink will tolerate wet soil and partial shade to sun if kept well watered. 'Little Redhead' is a cultivar of the species which may be found on line to purchase.



Indian Pink

*References: Theodor Klein Award Winners; Manual of Woody Landscape Plants by Michael Dirr; Missouri Botanical Gardens Plant Finder. Photographs courtesy of Yew Dell Botanical Garden.*

---