



Top 50 Low Maintenance Plants for Pollinators

Plants requiring the minimum effort for the maximum impact to look stunning and benefit our pollinating insects

List Curated by Thomas McBride

From research data collected and collated at the
National Botanic Garden of Wales

NB: Butterflies and Moths are not studied at the NBGW so any data on nectar plants beneficial for them is taken from Butterfly Conservation





Creating a Low-maintenance garden



This plant collection is for everyone out there that would love a pristine garden that attracts wildlife; but you just don't have the time to keep it apart from a the odd pruning session and a mowing of the lawn. Low maintenance plants for pollinators has you covered. This collection of plants contains lots of flowering shrubs as well as perennials and bulbous plants that should come back year on year without the need for much watering, dead-heading or other attention.



Planting

Just as with any other type of garden, layering in a low maintenance garden is still important but may be more-shrub heavy than traditional borders. Begin with plenty of shrubs and then add a mixture of perennials such as penstemons, lychnis, oriental poppies and phlox to the centre of the border. In the autumn you can plant snowdrops, grape hyacinths and tulips for a pop of colours in the spring. These bulbous flowers should keep coming back and some, like grape hyacinths, will spread and form a carpet of flowers in the spring. However, if you do not have the space for a border with perennials and bulbs, or wish to have a smaller green area, a mixture of shrubs can be planted and will have a great impact in their own right. Try Hypericum, Abelia or Weigela for maximum impact in a medium sized-shrub. If you are happy to wait a little longer for results, small trees such as crab apples, snowy mespilus or golden chains can be perfect for this type of garden.

Guide to using these pages:

Map

Maps depict the native area of the plant (in green)
They also show areas the plant is naturalised (in purple)

All maps shown are derived from 'Plants of the World Online'; courtesy of Kew Gardens

Flowering Period (this is when it is good for pollinators!)

Plant Family

Growing habit and mature size of the plant

Latin Binomial Name

Laburnum anagyroides

Common English Name

Golden Chain

Photograph of the plant in flower

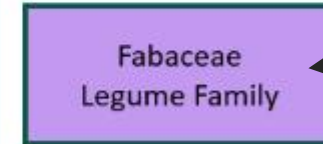


Insect groups known to favour the nectar of this plant

Useful knowledge or warnings about the plant

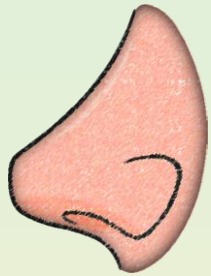


RHS AGM cultivars of this species (or a related species occasionally)



Key to these Pages

Additional information on these garden plants



The flowers and/or leaves have a Pleasant scent

This plant would only be suitable for meadow-style planting



Plant is often used in traditional Herbal Remedies



The plant has edible parts that are commonly eaten or used in cooking



Warnings



Plant tissue is highly toxic if ingested



Sap may cause irritation (Wash hands after touching or avoid touching)

Temperature

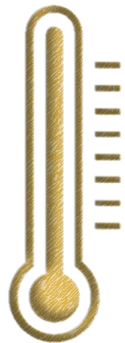
Some of the plants listed in our Top 200 are not fully hardy in all or some parts of the United Kingdom.

Plants without a thermometer symbol are fully hardy in the severest UK Winter; equating to **H5** or hardier.

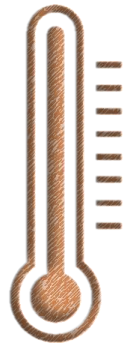
Plants with a coloured thermometer symbol are hardy to varying degrees as follows:



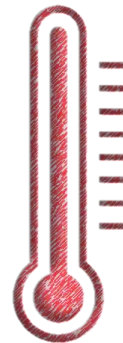
Almost Hardy
(H4)



Half-Hardy
(H3)



Not Frost Hardy
(H2)



Not Hardy
(H1)

RHS Hardiness Scale

H1a	-	Above 15°C
H1b	-	Minimum 10°C
H1c	-	Minimum 5°C
H2	-	Minimum 1°C
H3	-	Minimum -5°C
H4	-	Minimum -10°C
H5	-	Minimum -15°C

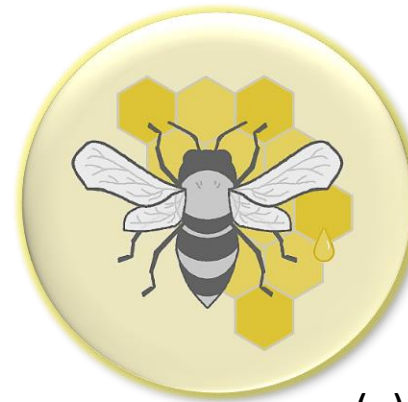
Pollinators

Our data on pollinators has been collected from studies spanning over a decade. Pollinator symbols appear when plants are proven to be good nectar plants for certain insects.

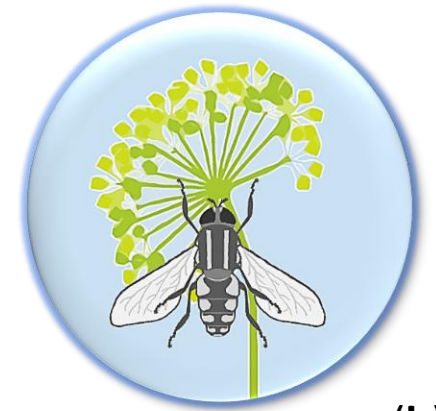
It should be noted that all bee and hoverfly data is ours but lepidoptera data is taken from Butterfly Conservation.

Our data spans a wide range of different insect species. For simplicity, these species have been condensed into six easy icons to represent them:

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| a) Honeybees | c) Bumblebees | e) Moths |
| b) Hoverflies | d) Butterflies
(Includes Moths) | f) Solitary Bees |



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)

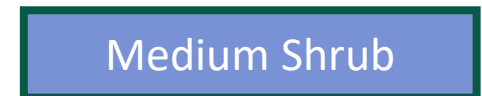


(f)

Abelia x grandiflora

Garden Abelia

Abelia chinensis x *Abelia uniflora*



Allium hollandicum

Dutch Garlic, Persian Garlic



Summer ☀

Amaryllidaceae
Daffodil Family

3ft Bulbous

Allium sphaerocephalon

Bristol Onion



Species

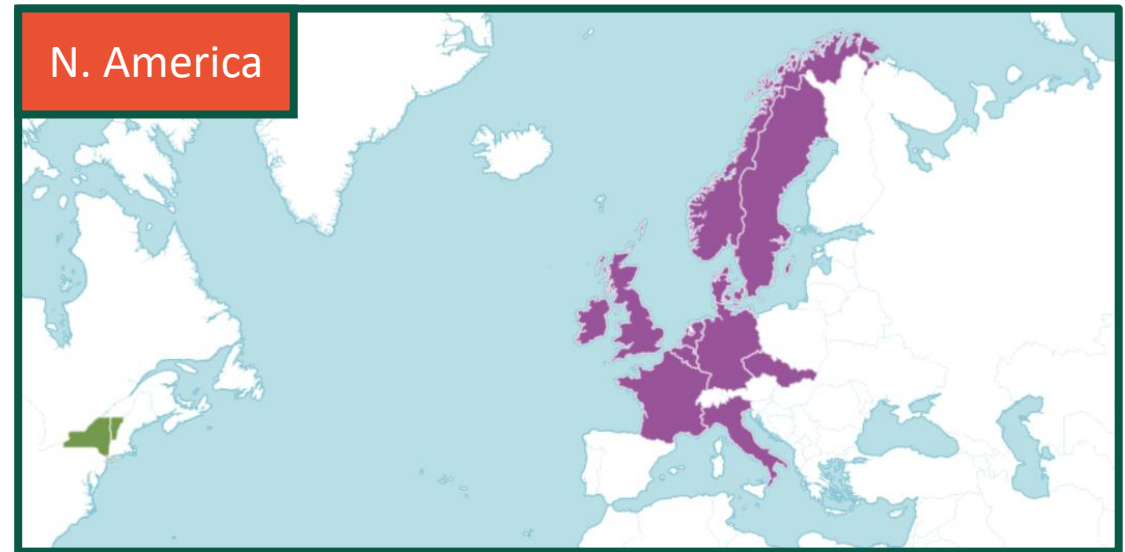


Amelanchier lamarckii

Snowy Mespilus



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Ekenitr



- Species -



Spring 

Rosaceae
Rose Family

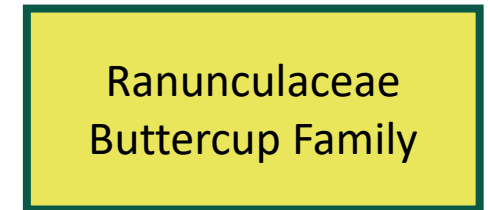
Small Tree

Anemone blanda

Balkan Windflower



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Dean Morley

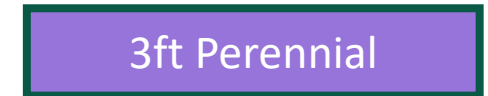
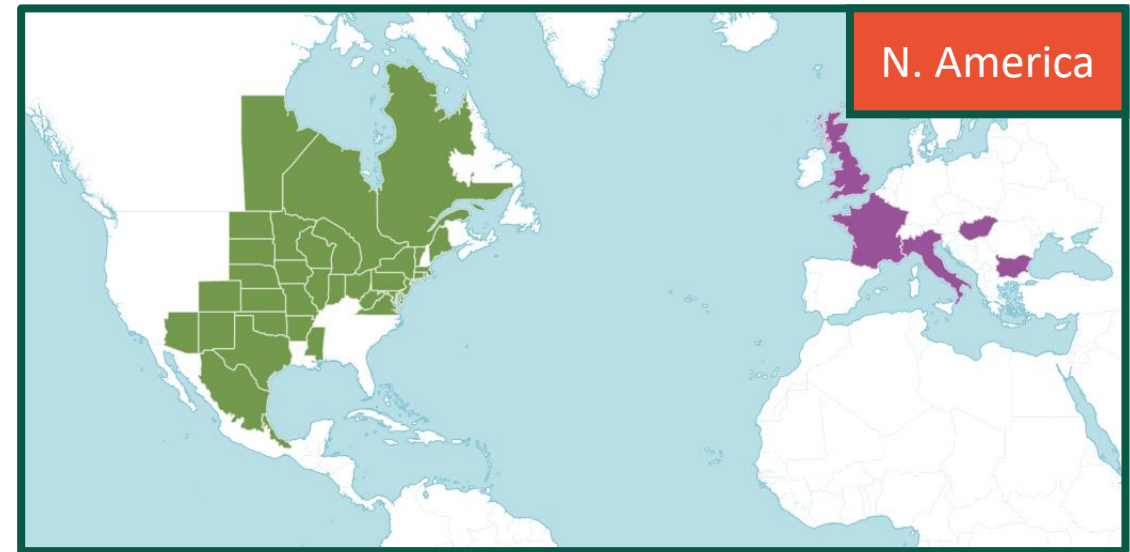


Aster ericoides

White Heath Aster

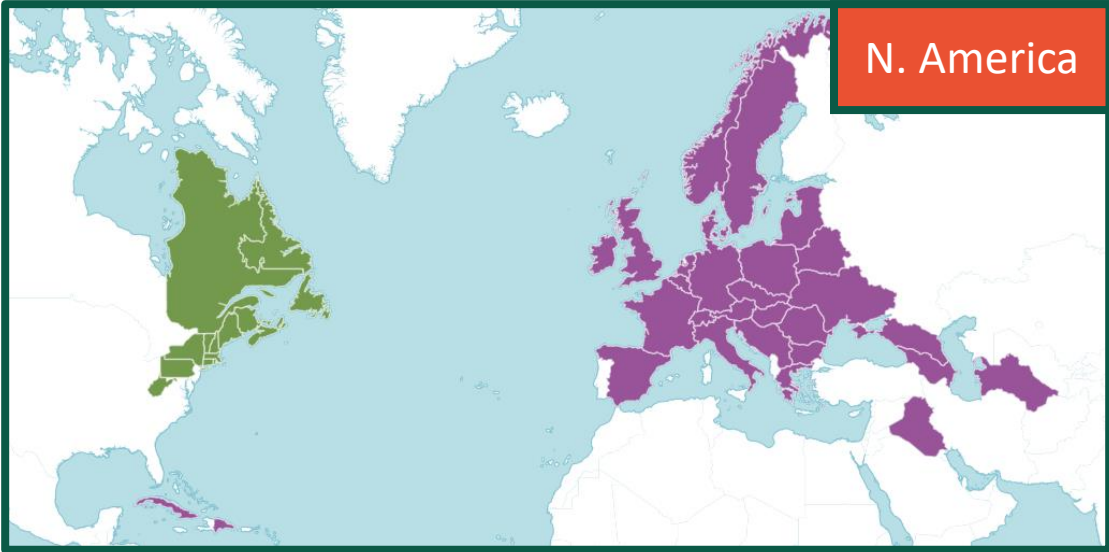


Photograph from Wikipedia (CC) Cody Hough



Aster novi-belgii

New York Aster



Midsummer
- Mid Autumn

Asteraceae
Daisy Family

3ft Perennial

Caryopteris incana

Common Bluebeard



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Hen Magonza



Related Hybrid: *Caryopteris x clandonensis*

‘Heavenly Blue’
‘Summer Sorbet’



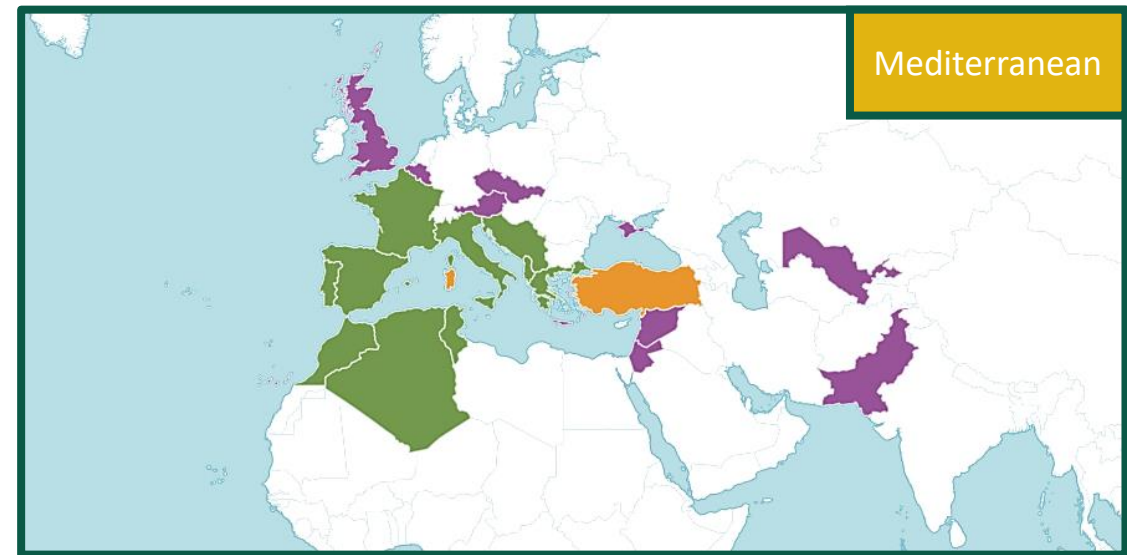
Midsummer
- Early Autumn

Lamiaceae
Mint Family

Small Shrub

Centranthus ruber

Red Valerian



None



Late Spring
- Early Autumn

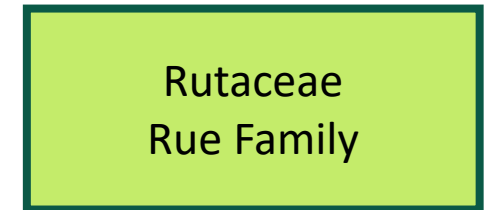
Caprifoliaceae
Honeysuckle Family

3ft Perennial

Choisya x dewitteana

Garden Mexican Orange Blossom

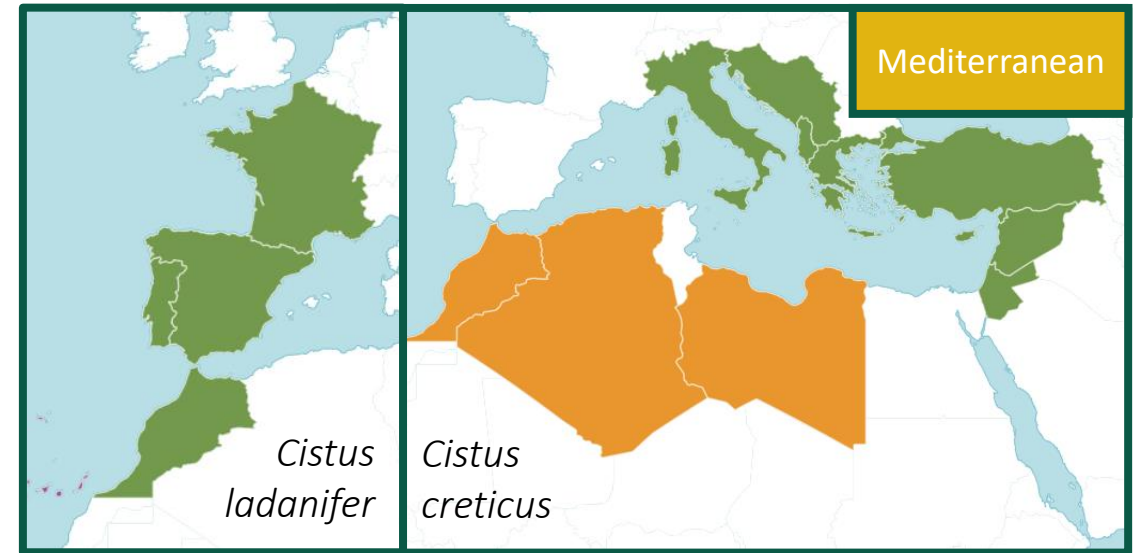
Choisya arizonica x *Choisya ternata*



Cistus x purpureus

Purple Rock-rose

Cistus ladanifer x *Cistus creticus*



-Hybrid-
'Betty Taudevin'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Summer ☀

Cistaceae
Rock-rose Family

Small Shrub

Crocosmia x crocosmiiflora

Montbretia

Crocosmia aurea x *Crocosmia pottsii* – naturally occurring hybrid



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Gabrielle Ludlow



'Star of the East'

'Lucifer'



Summer ☀

Iridaceae
Iris Family

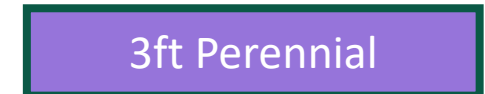
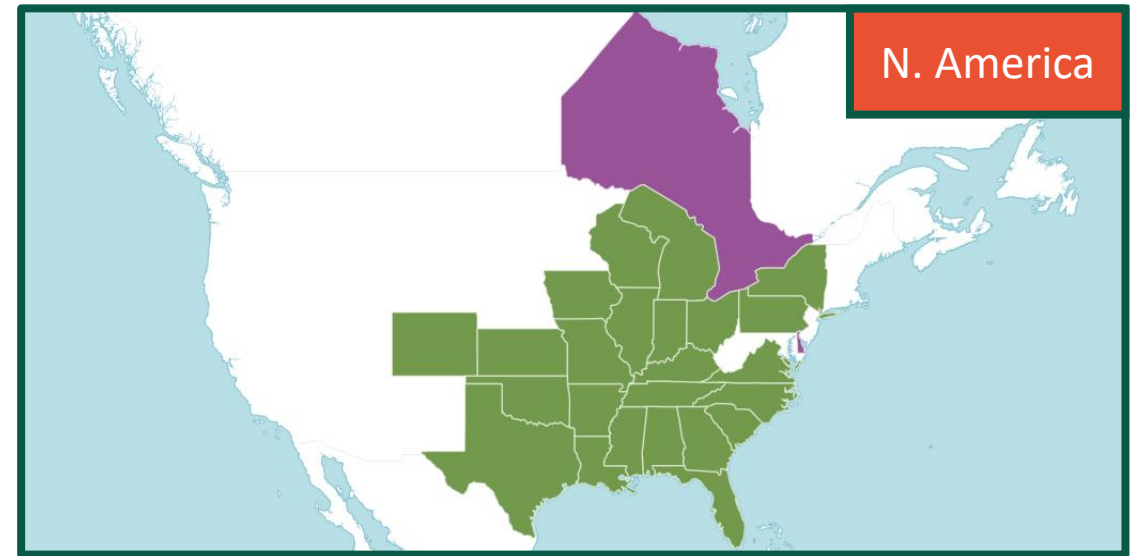
4ft Cormous

Echinacea purpurea

Purple Coneflower

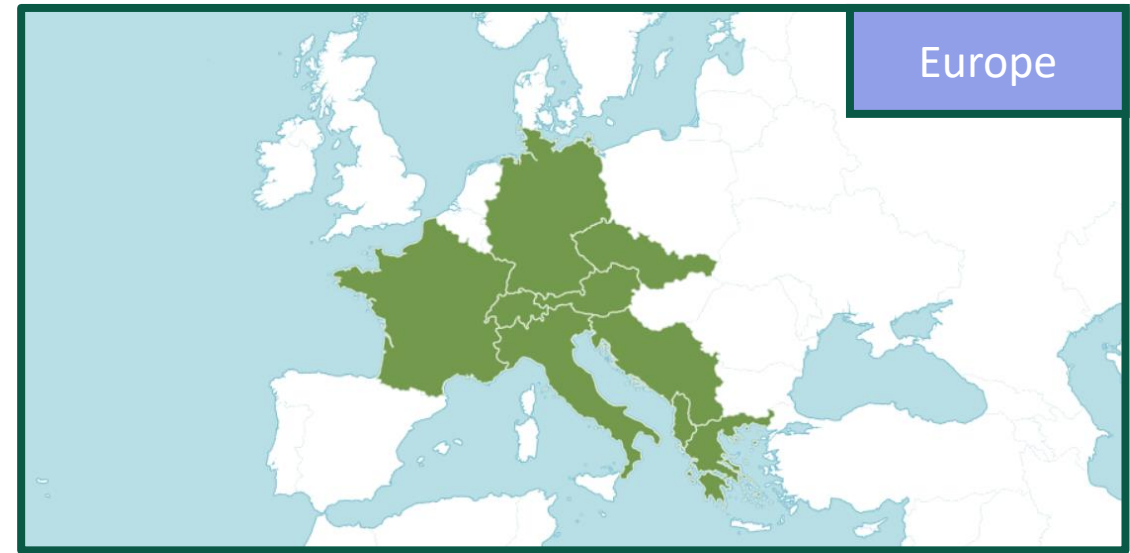


Photograph from Flickr (CC) Alvaro Regaly



Erica carnea

Winter Heather



‘Eva’ ‘Vivellii’
‘Winter Snow’



Mid Winter
- Early Spring

Ericaceae
Heather Family

Small Subshrub

Erysimum linifolium

Mauve Wallflower



'Bowles Mauve'



Early Spring
- Midsummer

Brassicaceae
Mustard Family

3ft Perennial

Fatsia japonica

Japanese Aralia



- Species -
'Variegata'



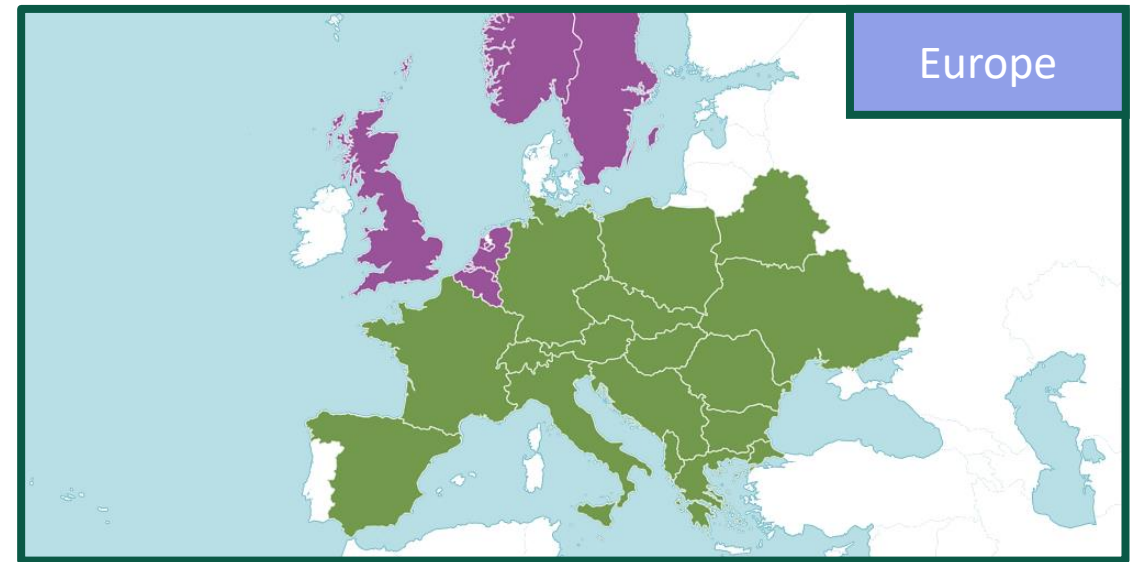
Autumn 

Araliaceae
Ivy Family

Medium Shrub

Galanthus nivalis

Common Snowdrop



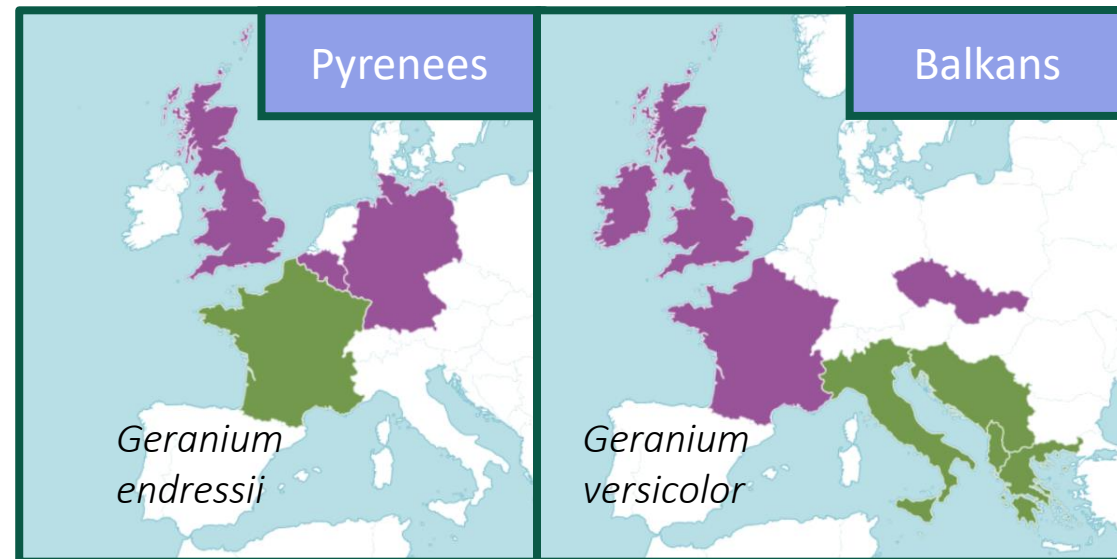
Geranium x oxonianum

Oxford Cranesbill

Geranium endressii x *Geranium versicolor*



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Kerry Woods



'A T Johnson'
'Wageningen'



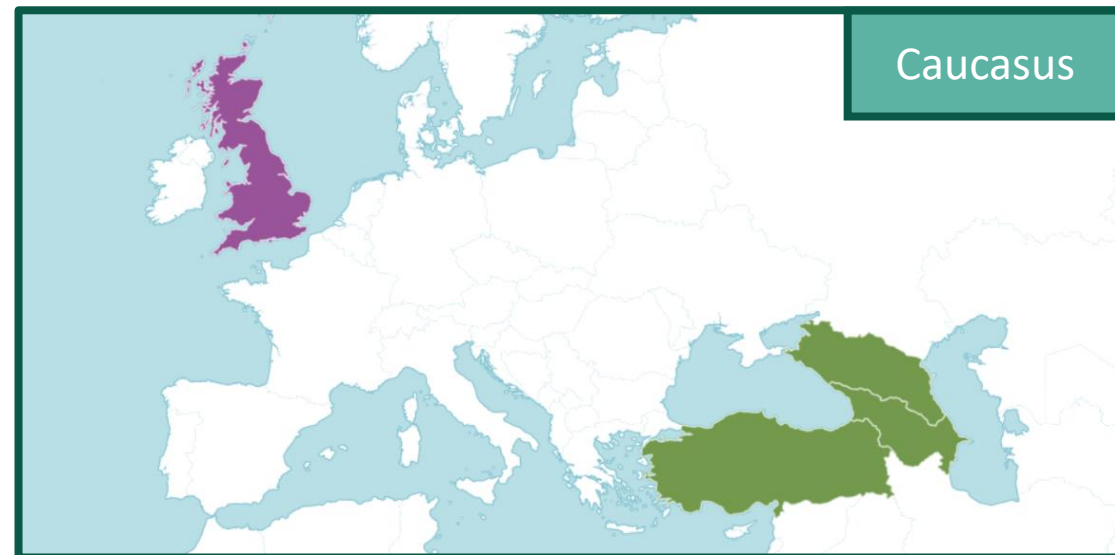
Late Spring –
Early Autumn

Geraniaceae
Cranesbill Family

2ft Perennial

Geranium psilostemon

Armenian Cranesbill



- Species -



Summer ☀

Geraniaceae
Cranesbill Family

3ft Perennial

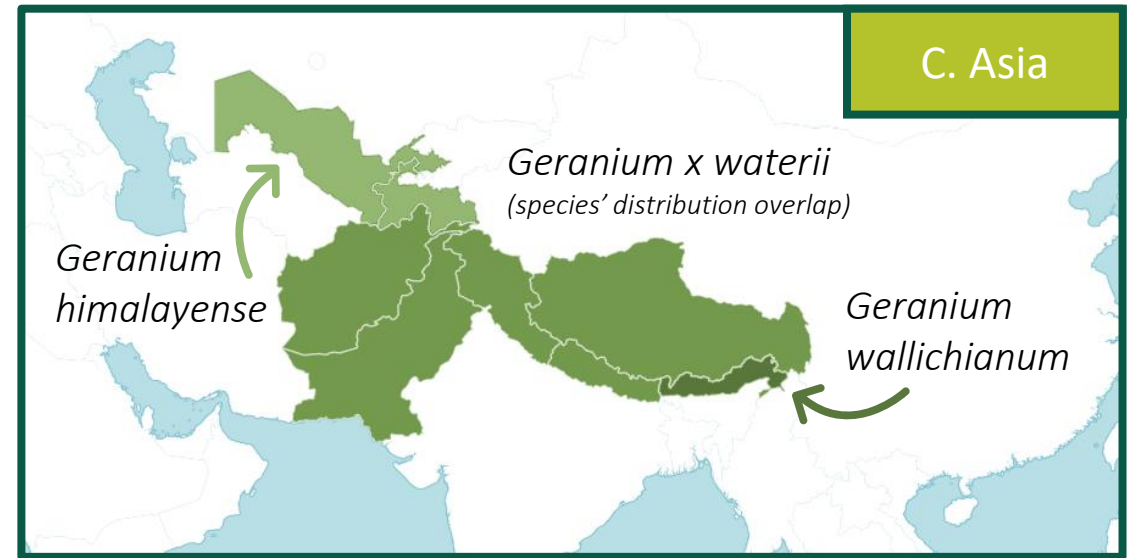
Geranium x watererii

Rozanne's Cranesbill

Geranium himalayense x *Geranium wallichianum*



Photograph from Flickr (CC) FarOutFlora



'Rozanne'

Early Summer
- Early Autumn

Geraniaceae
Cranesbill Family

2ft Perennial

Hamamelis mollis

Chinese Witch-hazel



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Wendy Cutler



'Jermyns Gold'
'Wisley Supreme'



Mid Winter
- Early Spring

Hamamelidaceae
Witch-hazel Family

Large Shrub

Helleborus orientalis

Lenten-rose



‘Walberton’s
Rosemary’ (Hybrid)



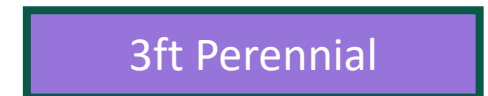
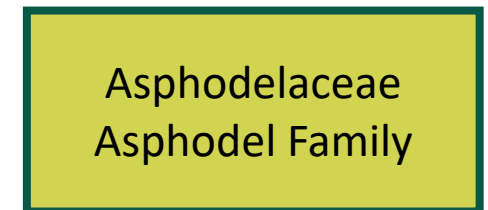
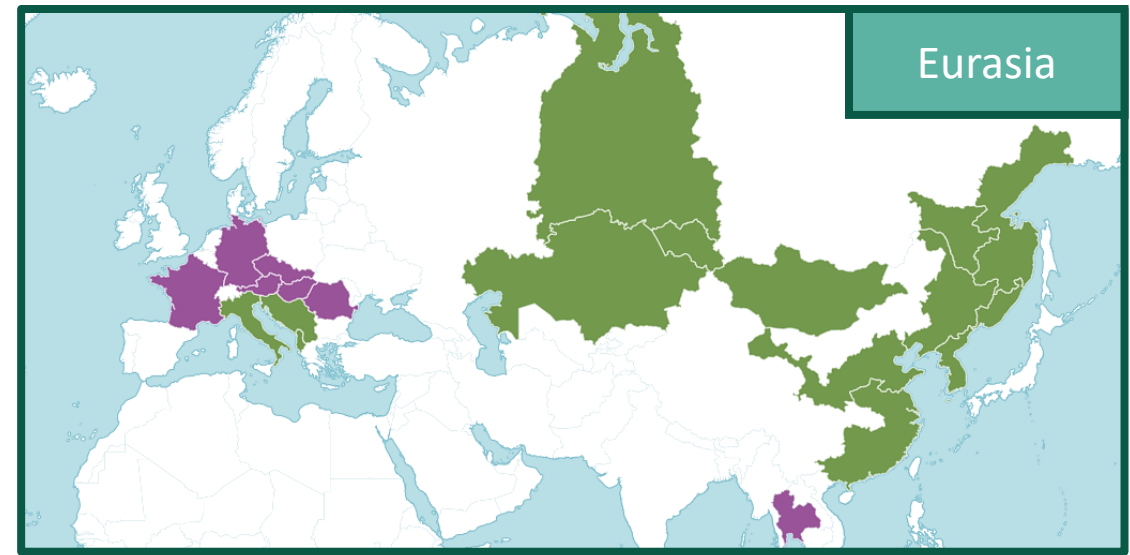
Midwinter
- Mid Spring

Ranunculaceae
Buttercup Family

2ft Perennial

Hemerocallis lilioasphodelus

Lemon Daylily

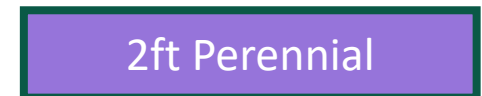
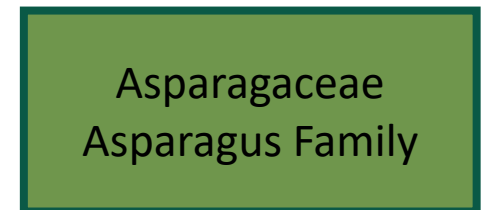


Hosta ventricosa

Blue Plantain-lily



Photograph from Flickr (CC) C T Johansson

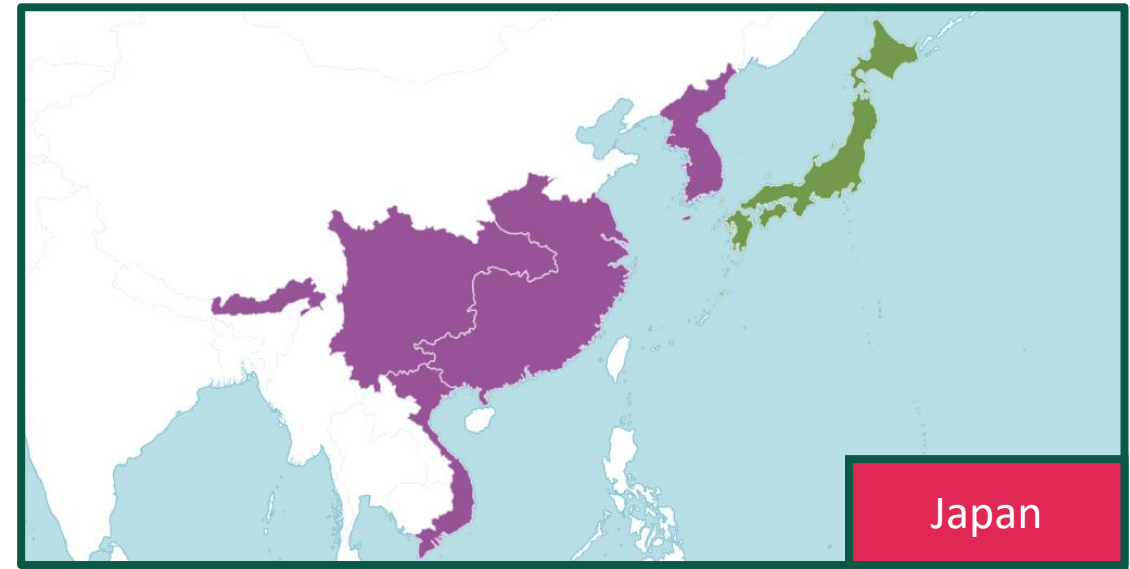


Hydrangea macrophylla

Large-leaf Hydrangea



Photograph from Flickr (CC) CyprusPictures



'Hanabi' 'Zorro'
'Quadricolour'



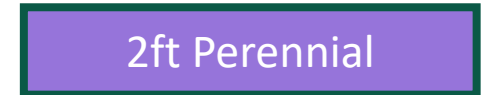
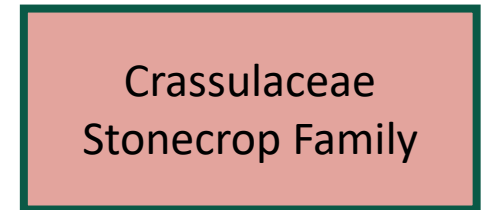
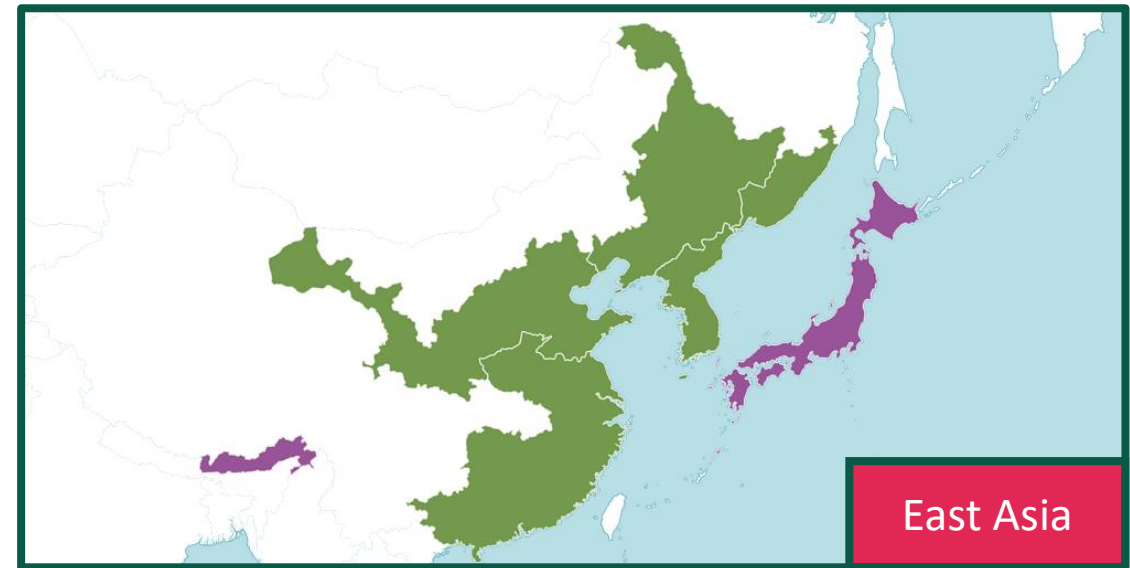
Summer ☀

Hydrangeaceae
Hydrangea Family

Medium Shrub

Hylotelephium spectabile

Showy Stonecrop, Sedum



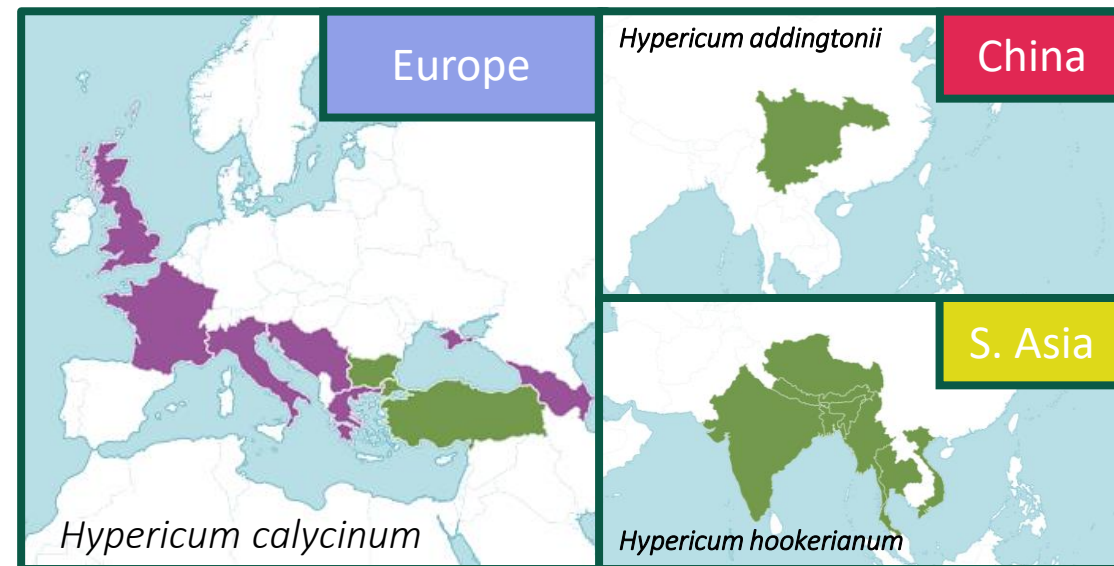
Hypericum x hidcoteense

Garden St John's Wort

Hypericum calycinum x *Hypericum x cyathiflorum**



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Allan Harris



Midsummer
- Early Autumn

Hypericaceae
St Johns Wort Family

Medium Shrub

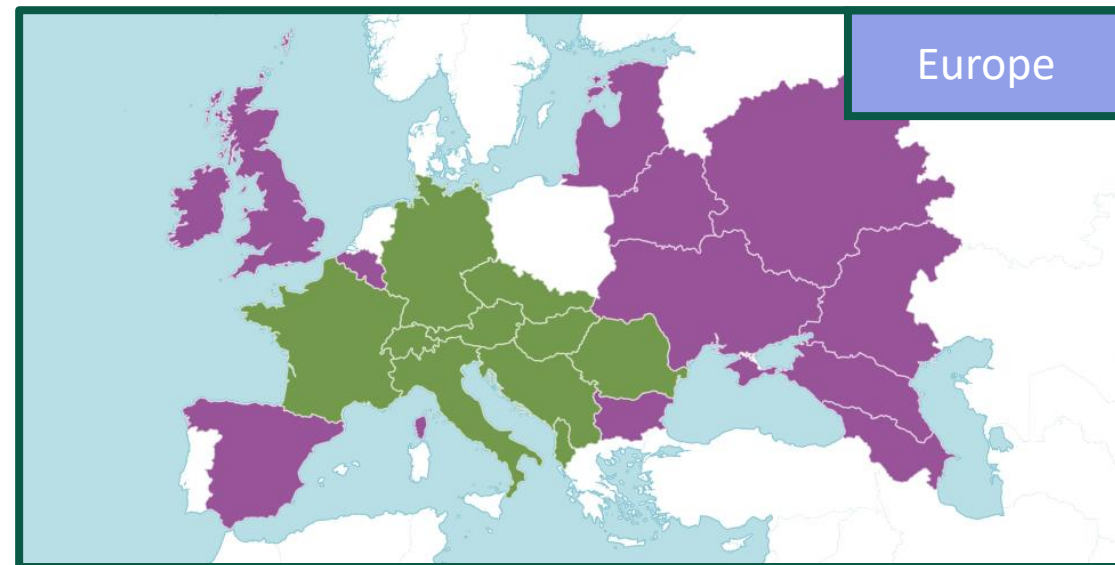
* *Hypericum x cyathiflorum* is a cross between *H. addingtonii* and *H. hookerianum*²⁷

Laburnum anagyroides

Golden Chain



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Maja Damat



L. anagyroides x L. alpinum

Laburnum x
watereri 'Vossii'

The RHS Award of Garden Merit logo, featuring a trophy cup inside a circular border with the text "RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT". To the right of the logo is a stylized tree icon.

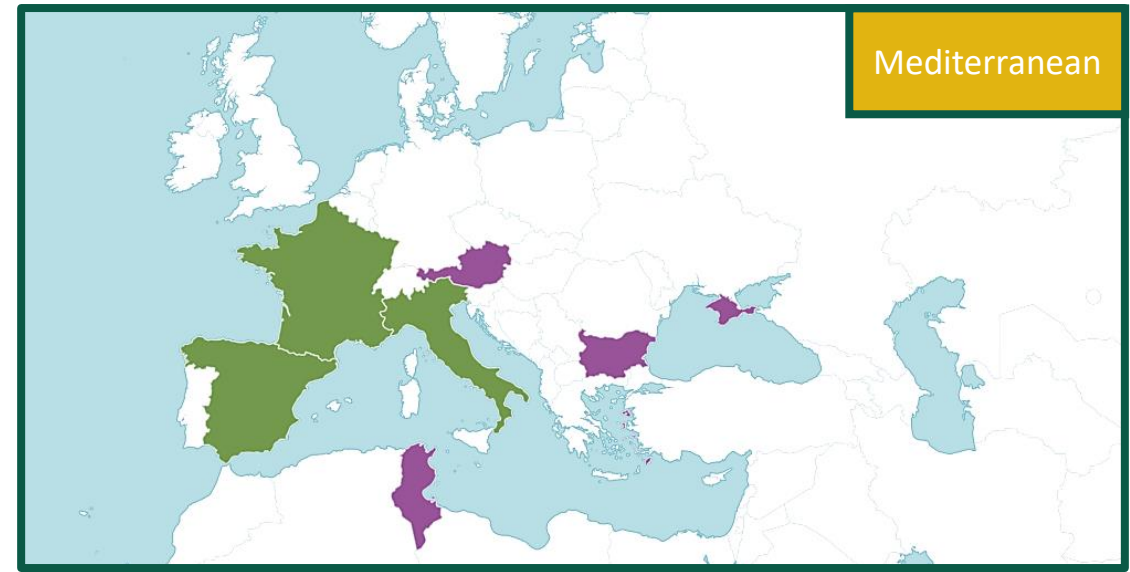
Late Spring
- Early Summer

Fabaceae
Legume Family

Medium Tree

Lavandula angustifolia

English Lavender



'Folgate' 'Hidcote'
'Miss Katherine'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Summer ☀

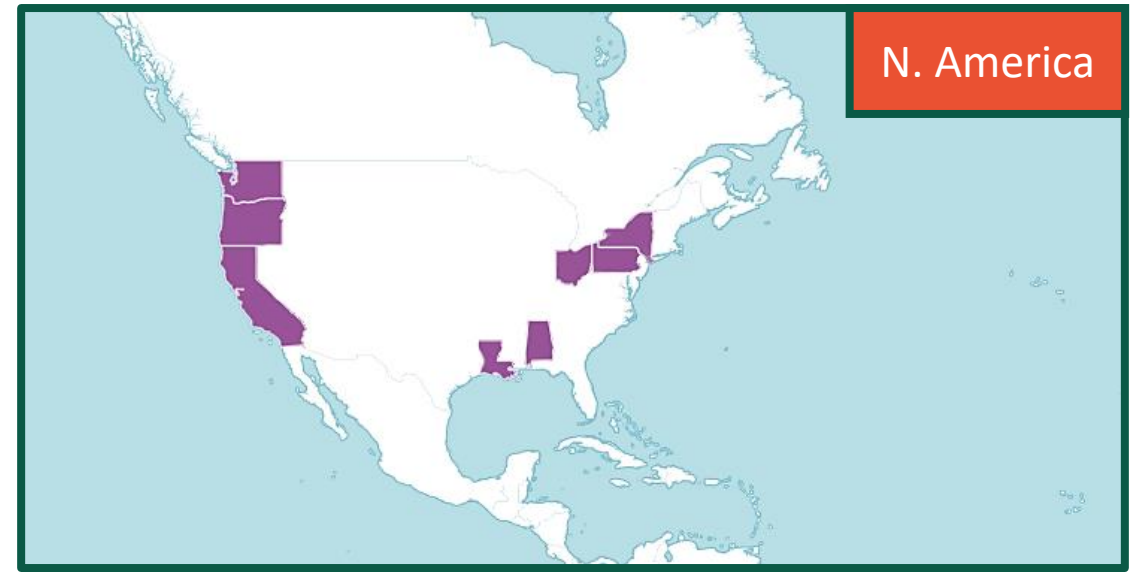
Lamiaceae
Mint Family

Small Shrub

Leucanthemum x superbum

Shasta Daisy

Complex Hybrid*



Midsummer
- Early Autumn

Asteraceae
Daisy Family

4ft Perennial

* Map therefore shows naturalised regions as there is no native region

Ligustrum sinense

Chinese Privet Bush



Related species: *L. lucidum*

‘Tricolor’
‘Excelsum Superbum’

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

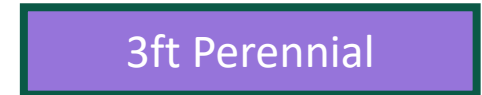
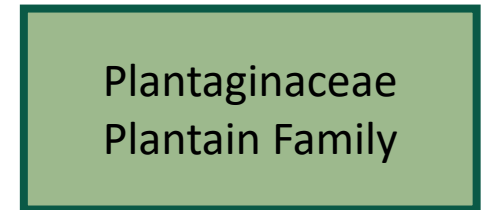
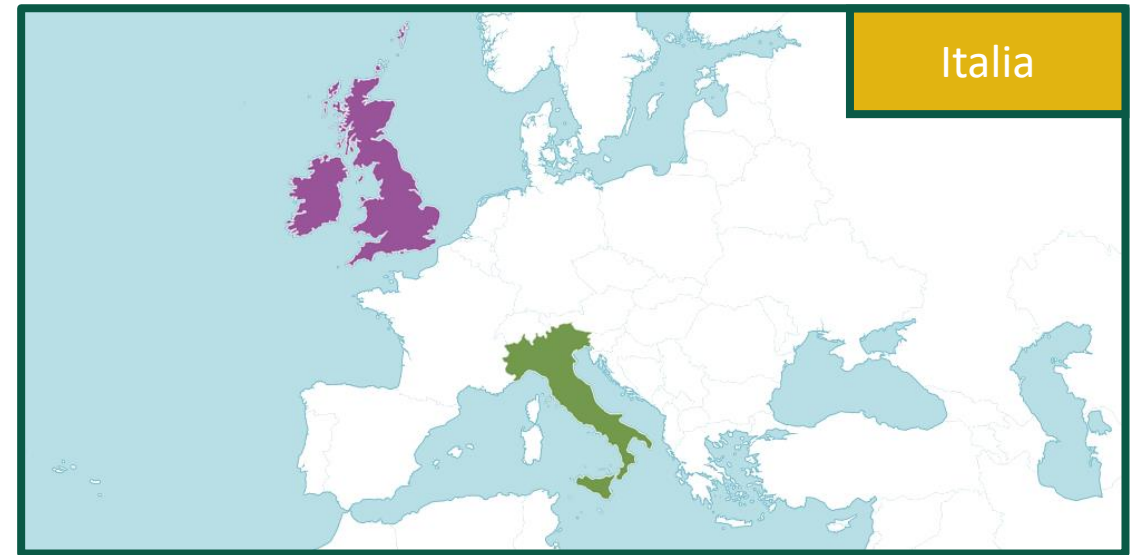
Midsummer
- Early Autumn

Oleaceae
Olive Family

Medium Shrub

Linaria purpurea

Purple Toadflax

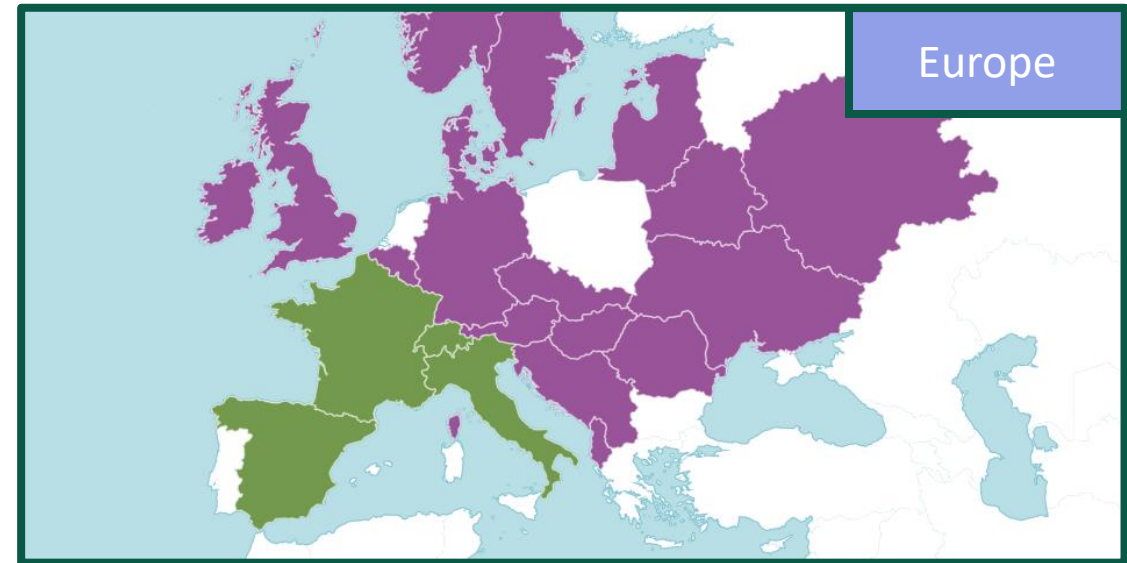


Lunaria annua

Honesty



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Marc R.



Var. albiflora
'Alba variegata'



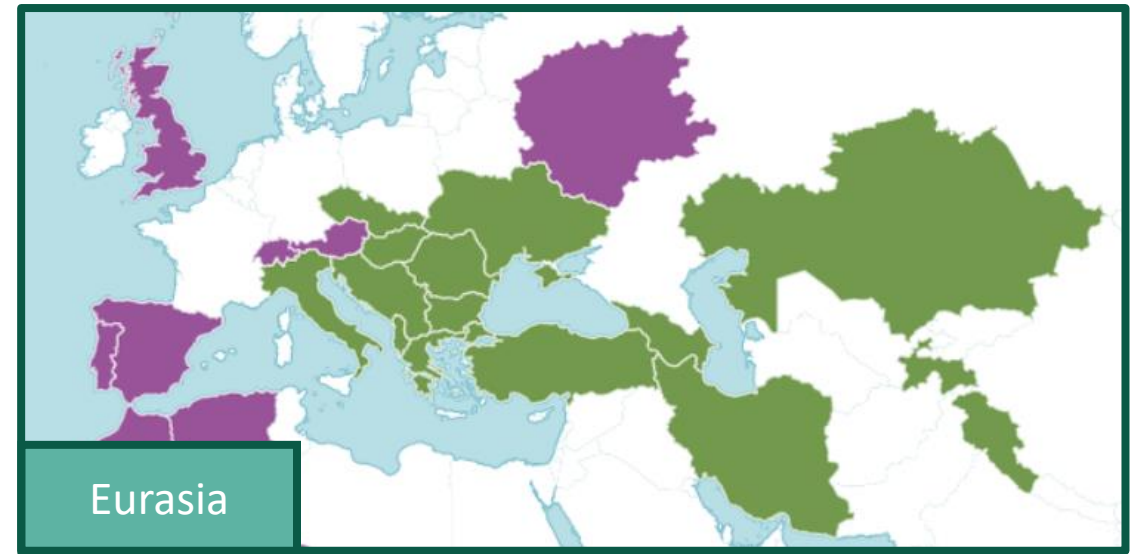
Late Spring
- Early Summer

Brassicaceae
Mustard Family

3ft Biennial / Annual

Lychnis coronaria

Rose Campion



- Species -
'Alba'



Summer ☀

Caryophyllaceae
Pink Family

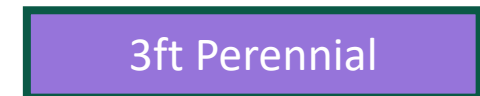
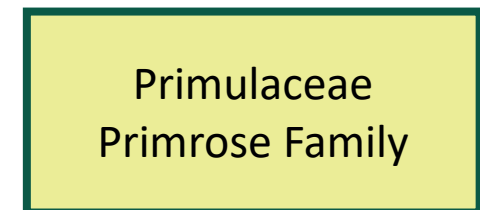
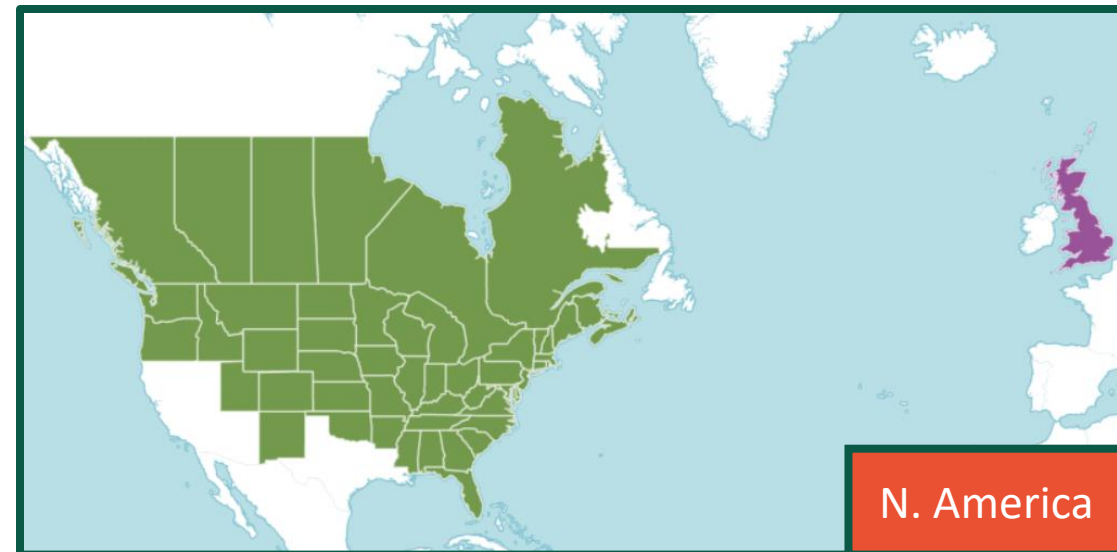
3ft Biennial

Lysimachia ciliata

Fringed Loosestrife



Photograph from Flickr (CC) John Brandauer



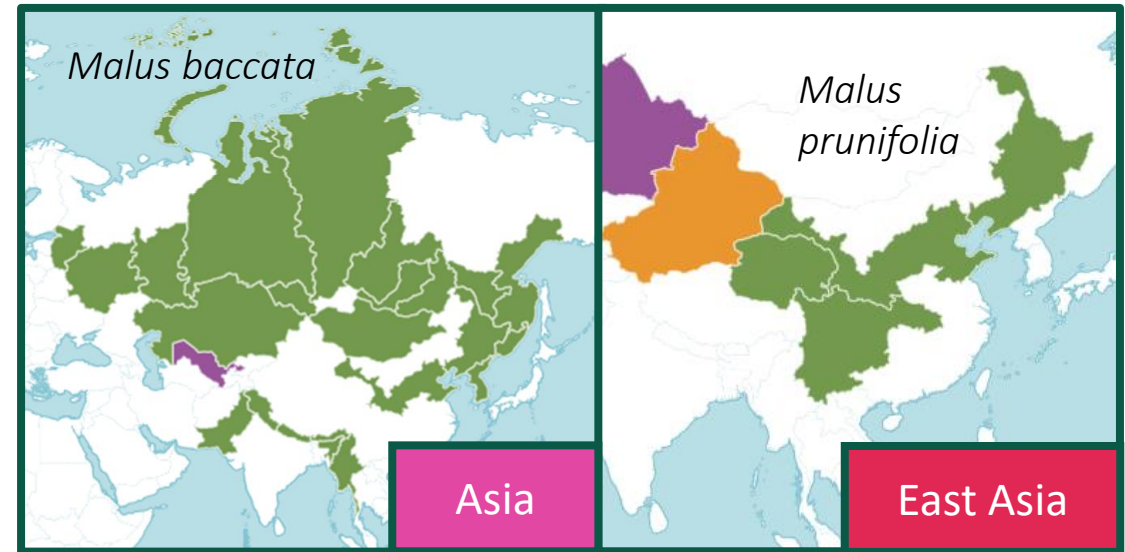
Malus x robusta


Siberian Crab Apple


Malus baccata x *Malus prunifolia*



Photograph from Wikipedia (CC) Rasbak, Jubele_CZ (Fruit)



Spring 

Autumn  (Fruits)

Rosaceae
Rose Family

Small Tree

Muscari armeniacum

Garden Grape-Hyacinth



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Yves Merck



Eurasia

'Christmas Pearl'
- Species -



Early Winter
- Mid Spring

Asparagaceae
Asparagus Family

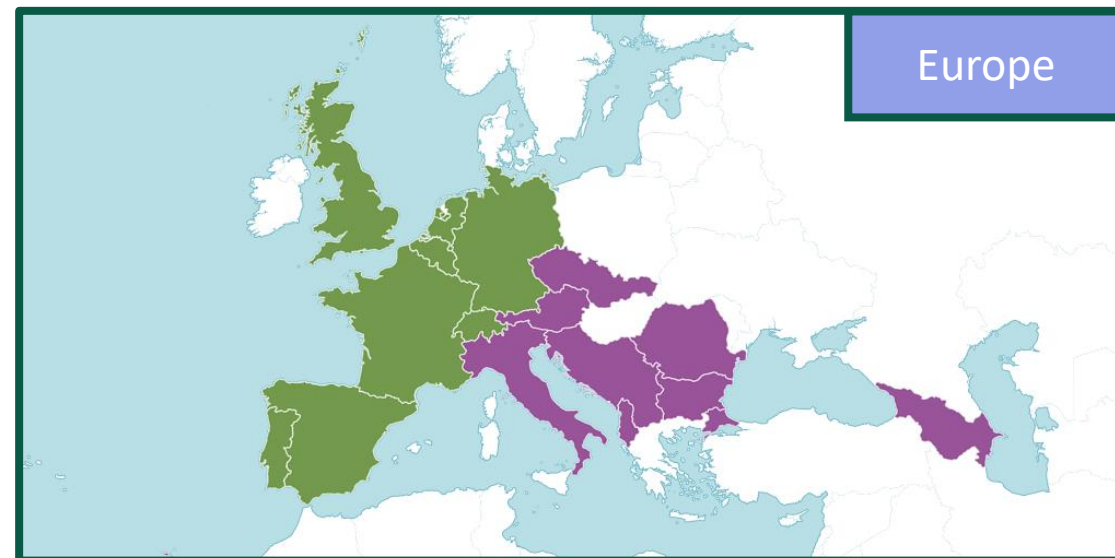
1ft Bulbous

Narcissus pseudonarcissus

Wild Daffodil, Lent-lily



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Šarunas Bardulis



Ssp. Pseudonarcissus
‘Dutch Master’

Late Winter
- Mid Spring

Amaryllidaceae
Daffodil Family

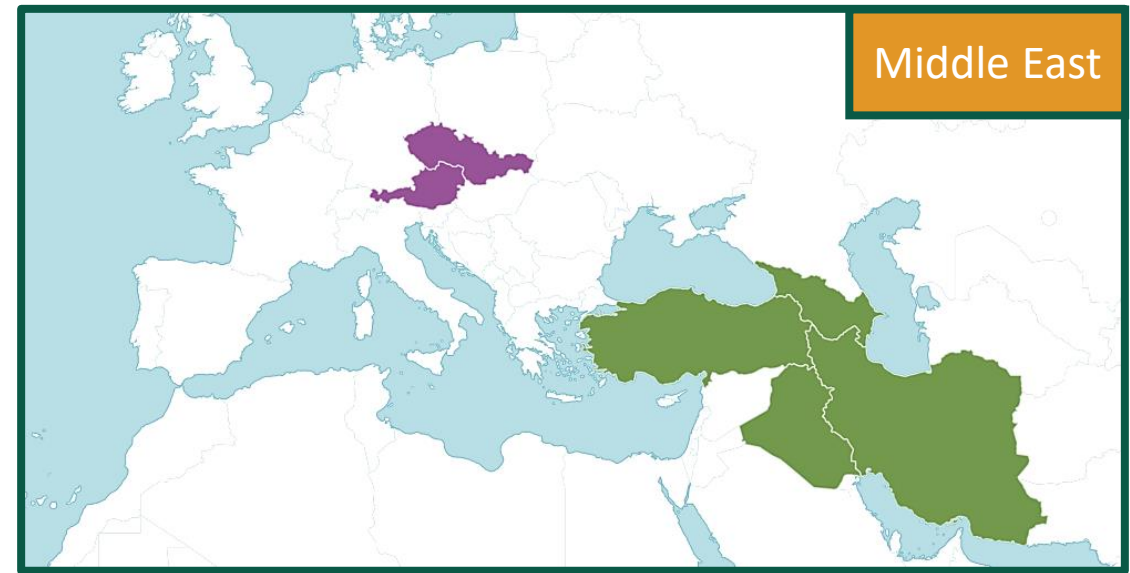
1ft Bulbous

Nepeta racemosa

Garden Catnip



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Shihmei Barger



Middle East

'Walker's Low'
- Species -



Late Spring
- Late Summer

Lamiaceae
Mint Family

2ft Perennial

Origanum majorana

Marjoram

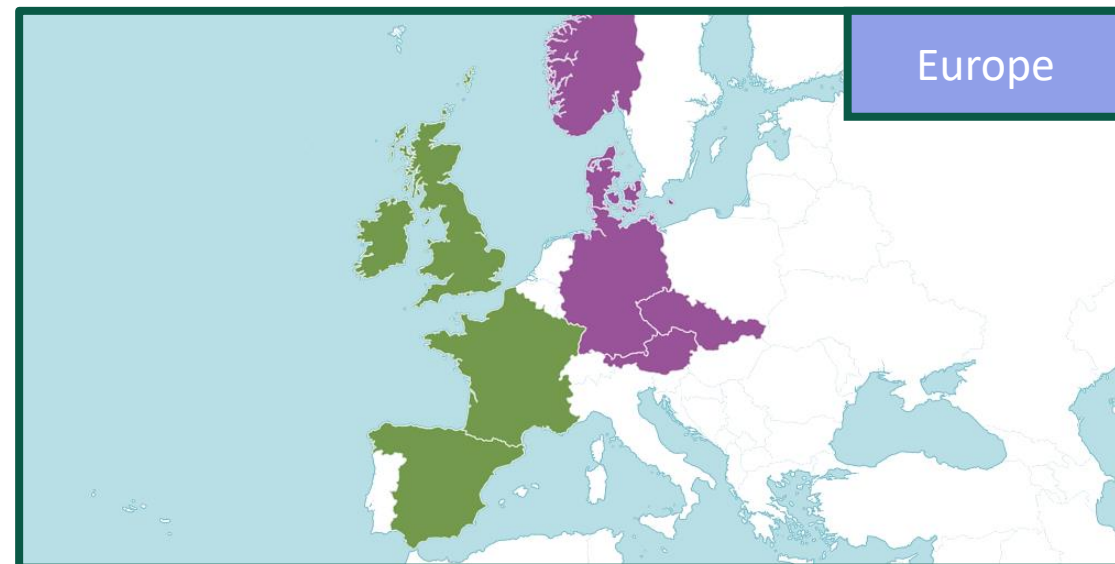


Papaver cambricum

Welsh Poppy



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Jill Catley



None

Mid Spring
- Early Autumn

Papaveraceae
Poppy Family

2ft Perennial

Papaver orientale

Oriental Poppy



Late Spring
- Midsummer

Papaveraceae
Poppy Family

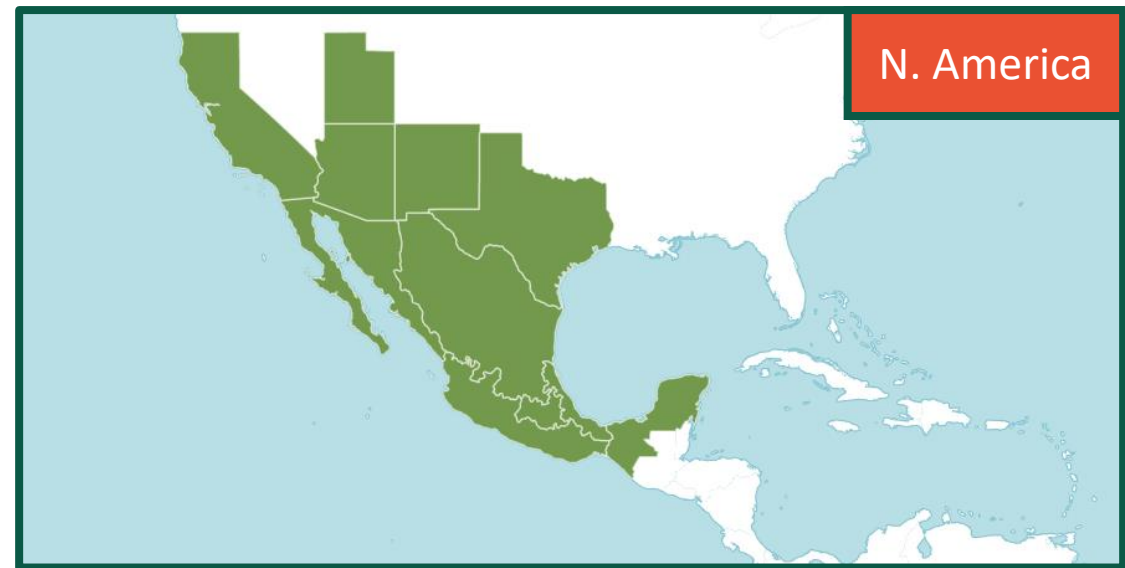
2ft Perennial

Penstemon barbatus

Beardlip Penstemon



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Lotus Johnson



'Andenken an
Friedrich Hahn'



Midsummer
- Early Autumn

Plantaginaceae
Plantain Family

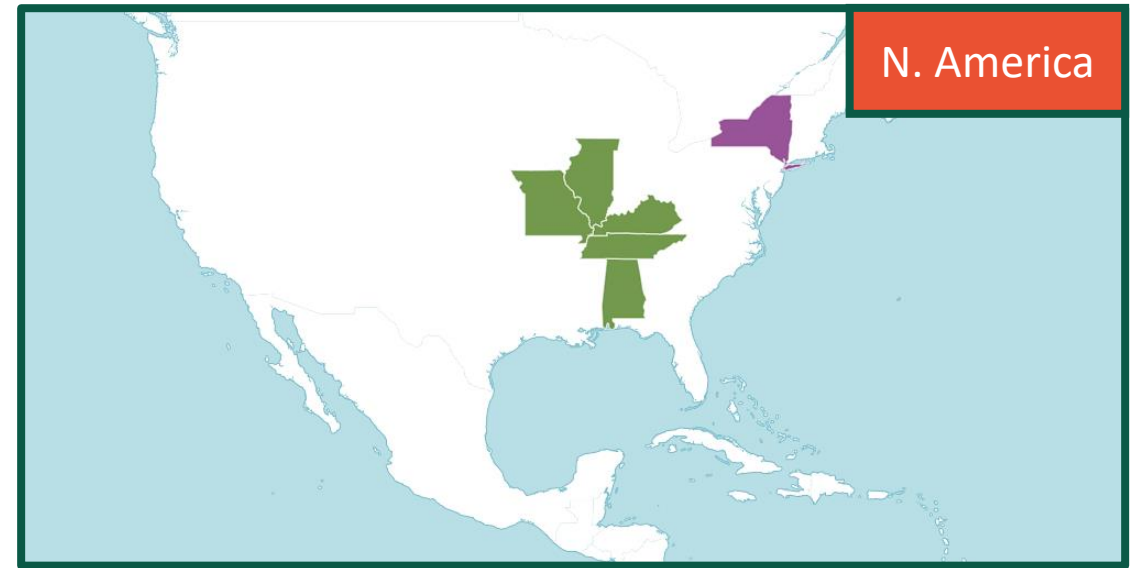
2ft Perennial

Phlox paniculata

Garden Phlox



Photograph from Flickr (CC) - Jane Nearing



'David' 'Flamingo'
'Prince of Orange'



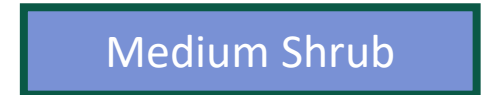
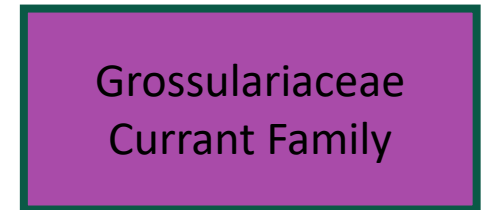
Midsummer
- Early Autumn

Polemoniaceae
Jacob's Ladder Family

3ft Perennial

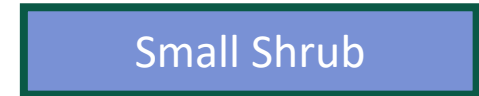
Ribes sanguineum

Red-flowered Currant



Rosmarinus officinalis

Rosemary Plant

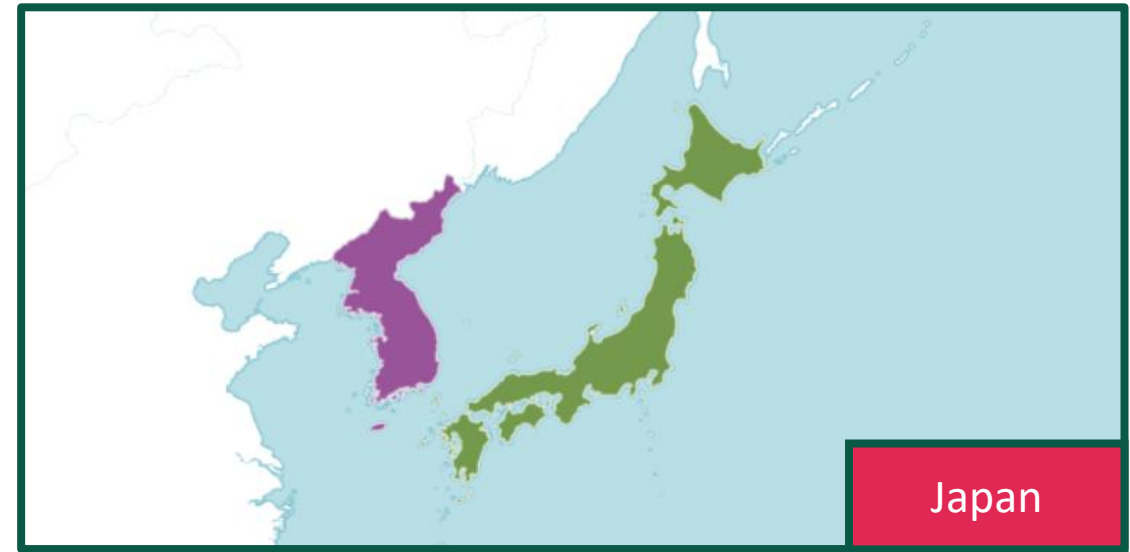


Spiraea japonica

Japanese Spiraea



Photograph from Flickr (CC) BeautifulCataya



'Candlelight'
'Dart's Red'



Summer ☀

Rosaceae
Rose Family

Medium Shrub


Tulipa gesneriana

Garden Tulip



Hundreds of
Cultivars



Spring 

Liliaceae
Lily Family

2ft Bulbous

Weigela florida

Garden Weigela



'Alexandra'
'Variegata'



Late Spring
- Midsummer

Caprifoliaceae
Honeysuckle Family

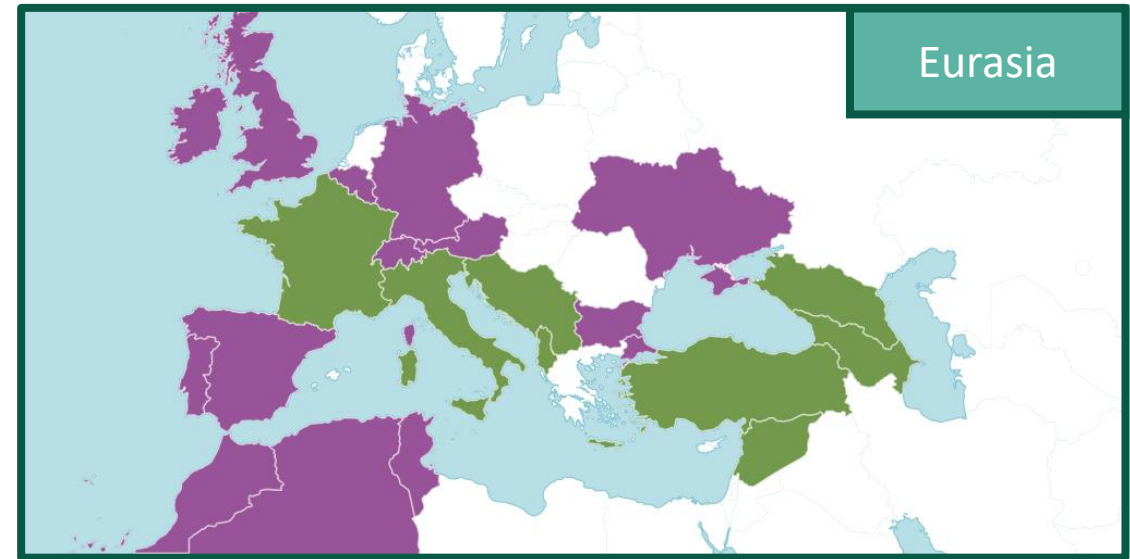
Medium Shrub

Vinca major

Greater Periwinkle



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'Variegata'



Mid Spring
- Early Autumn

Apocynaceae
Milkweed Family

Medium Sub-shrub