EARLY JAPANESE CHERRIES,
THE QUINCES AND SHADBUSHES

Actually, the first Prunus to bloom at the Arboretum is Prunus Davidiana (starting this year on April 1) and followed by Prunus mandshurica the middle of the month. In New York and New England Japanese cherries begin to bloom usually the latter part of April and by the time this Bulletin reaches its readers the early, single flowered group of these cherries will be in full bloom. Sargent's cherry, Prunus Sargentii, formerly Prunus serrulata sachalinensis, is the hardiest of these flowering cherries. It grows to be a standard tree, has light pink flowers, and the young foliage as it unfurls is a good bronze color, an excellent combination. Since the flowers are single, it, unfortunately, does not hold them very long, particularly during warm spells.

Prunus subhirtella is admittedly the most floriferous of any of this early flowering group, frequently having so many flowers that trunk and branches are actually hidden. The flowers are single, light pink. The tree itself is usually small and bushy, and among seedlings, there is considerable variation in the form of different plants. Its weeping form, Prunus subhirtella pendula, is now common everywhere, and was very likely one of the first "Japanese cherries" introduced into this country. In 1846 the old Ellwanger and Barry Nursery of Rochester, New York, listed a plant in their catalogue at that time, which was undoubtedly this variety.

The Yoshino cherry, Prunus yedoensis, is a beautiful tree with single white flowers, blooming just a few days later than the Sargent cherry, and which is slightly flower bud tender during the severest of New England winters. Where it succeeds, it makes an excellent combina-
tion with the deep pink-flowered P. Sargentii. It is interesting to note, that in the original gift of over two thousand cherry trees from the city of Tokyo to the city of Washington, in 1912, this tree constituted about half the lot. In fact, Professor C. S. Sargent in writing about the Yoshino in 1922 said that, prior to the great earthquake, there were at least two hundred and fifty thousand of these trees growing in Tokyo. This shows what the Japanese think of this beautiful tree.

These four trees then constitute the most outstanding of the single-flowered types, all of which bloom at about the same time. After this group has passed the stage of full flower, the double-flowered forms start to bloom, led by the Naden cherry, P. Sieboldii.

Japanese Quinces. There has been a great confusion about the nomenclature of this group of plants, but in common parlance they can still be termed Japanese quinces. Chaenomeles lagenaria is the scientific name now given to the old-fashioned Japanese quince formerly called Chaenomeles japonica or Cydonia japonica, which used to be planted so frequently for hedges before the advent of Japanese barberry. It was introduced from Japan, possibly before 1800, and is still a garden favorite. It will soon be in full bloom at the Arboretum. Since it has been in cultivation so long, there are naturally various varieties, with flowers of different hues, and some even with double flowers. Since many of these varieties are in the trade, but are only offered under the species name, it would only be confusion to mention them here. Suffice it to say that there are varieties in white, pink, a rich dark red, and various combinations of these.

The true Chaenomeles japonica (Cydonia Maulei now in the trade) is a lovely little plant which should be better known. It is not as tall growing as Chaenomeles lagenaria, seldom getting more than 2 or 3 feet tall, but is dense and compact with some varieties of very brilliantly colored flowers.

Since these flowering quinces, together with the common quince, Cydonia oblonga, which has little ornamental value but is used considerably for its fruits, are all members of the apple family, they are, of course, all subject to fire blight, borer and scale, and perhaps this is the chief reason why the Japanese barberry has replaced them in hedge plantings.

The Shadbushes. Now the shadbushes will soon be in bloom all over the northeastern United States. Often called shadblows, service berries or Juneberries, they are so named because they bloom at about the same time the shad run up the streams from the sea; their edible fruits ripen in June. There are tree types, Amelanchier cana-
Japanese Spring Cherry (*Prunus subhirtella*)
densis, A. laevis and A. grandiflora, and bushy types, A. oblongifolia and A. spicata. Their delicate white flowers, common to everyone familiar with the woods at this time of year, are all practically the same from a landscape point of view with the possible exception of A. grandiflora (A. canadensis × A. laevis) which has the largest flowers of any. Its variety, rubescens, has flowers which are more or less tinged with rose. Sometimes, unfortunately, weather conditions are such that the plants are only effective in flower for a very few days, particularly when a rather long cold spell has kept the buds from opening, followed by a sudden warm spell during which they open with a rush. It seems worthless, often, to use plants for only a few days effectiveness in the year, but the Amelanchiers have the added advantage of beautiful gray bark, and a fairly good autumn red color, together with fruits in June which are attractive to birds.

Amelanchiers are most effectively used in naturalistic plantings, especially on the borders of woodlands. Their dainty white blossoms, open now, seem to be a fulfilled promise that spring has come at last. Immediately after they are through blooming a great majority of plants burst out into leaf.

**Early Spireas.** Two of the first Spireas to bloom in the spring are Thunberg’s *Spiraea Thunbergii*, and bridalwreath, *S. prunifolia plena*. Both these plants may be somewhat tender in New England, but in other sections they are both very common. Since Thunberg’s Spirea is the first to bloom, it might be used effectively with the pink *Prunus triloba plena*, now in bloom. The double-flowered bridalwreath on the other hand can be used very effectively with the lower growing and later blooming pink-flowered *Prunus glandulosa sinensis*. In planning or replanting shrub groups enough emphasis cannot be placed on this very important factor of flower color and blooming dates, since effective combinations like these are decidedly worth while.

**Other Plants Now in Bloom.** With the early warm spell this spring and the more recent cold rainy spell the blooming dates of plants are again back to normal. Plants in bloom at the Arboretum now are the Corylopsis species, the forsythias, *Cornus mas* and *C. officinalis*, though these are about past, *Dirca palustris*, *Benzoin aestivale*, *Acer rubrum*, *Prunus mandshurica*, *Erica carnea*, *Pieris floribunda*, *Vinea minor* and *Magnolia stellata*, though *M. denudata*, *M. kobus* and even some of the *M. Soulangeana* varieties are fast nearing full bloom. Though it is hard to gauge blooming dates, particularly this year, we hazard a guess that the crabapples will be at their height of bloom May 10 to 16. Lilacs will probably be best at about May 15 to 20. **Donald Wyman**