The extremely cold weather of last week did considerable damage to the open blossoms; the Asiatic Magnolias in particular suffered severely and in many gardens the flowers were utterly ruined. It is unfortunate that these handsome plants put forth their blooms so early for rarely a year passes but what they are damaged in and around Boston. Last year and this those of the Star Magnolia, the White Yulan and Magnolia Soulangiana were utterly spoiled. To protect them from the late spring frosts the only hope is to plant them beneath the shade of trees or in some position where they are sheltered from the morning sun. The same remark applies to Rhododendron dauricum mucronulatum, which has likewise suffered greatly. In the spring we are so hungry for flowers that there is an irresistible temptation to grow plants which open their blossoms as early as possible. The result is that almost every year we are saddened by the effects of late frosts. Fortunately, the Cherry blossoms at Forest Hills Gate, which were not sufficiently advanced, came through unscathed and are now a delightful picture in pink and white. The floriferousness of these Cherries is, to say the least, remarkable; year after year they put forth a myriad of blooms. The cool spring and the consequent slow opening of blossoms has been favorable to the development of anthocyanin with the result that the flowers on some plants are more pink than is usual. The Sargent Cherry and some of the Asiatic Pears are noteworthy examples of this phenomenon. Some years the Sargent Cherry tree by the pond at the junction of Meadow and Forest Hills Roads has white flowers but this year they are a deep pink.

Prunus tomentosa, the Nanking Cherry, is an old and well-known favorite. Widespread in northeastern Asia, it is a plant of remarkable hardiness, doing well in some of the coldest parts of the United States. A broad, twiggy shrub with ascending branches it makes a rounded mass with the twigs throughout their whole length strung with white blossoms. The bark is dark and by contrast adds to the
beauty of the flowering bush; its fruits are bright red, of a subacid flavor, and quite palatable. Hybridists are at work with this plant and it may prove the forerunner of a new group of bush Cherries. In the experience of the Arboretum it is not a long-lived plant but being readily raised from seed or rooted from cuttings this should not militate against its planting.

The Forsythias withstood the cold blasts of last week in a remarkable fashion and remain a glorious mass of brilliant yellow. This is one of the bravest of all shrubs and few will deny that it is also one of the most joyous. Wherever it is seen in blossom it inspires cheerfulness and the manner in which it withstands all manner of abuse calls forth the greatest admiration. It is an excellent subject for cities, thriving equally well in the small town garden, park or square as it does in the pure air of the country. It is, indeed, an indispensable spring flowering shrub. In a state of nature the species grow in fully exposed rocky land and perhaps through aeons of time this has inured them to harsh treatment. Be this as it may, they will grow almost anywhere and in almost any kind of soil although they, no more than any shrub, do not object to rich food. Good drainage is the essential thing, therefore, a bank or slope makes an ideal situation. After they have flowered the bushes may be severely pruned, but alas! no shrub suffers so much from the mania for spring cleaning in the garden as do these good-natured plants. No matter where one goes one sees them badly mutilated either in the fall or early spring instead of waiting until the blossom season is over.

Forsythia suspensa was the first known, being introduced into Holland from Japan in 1833. It is, however, a Chinese plant probably taken to the "Land of The Rising Sun" by flower-loving Buddhist priests. The type is a rambling plant with long, whip-like branches which emit roots freely wherever they touch the ground. It is an excellent subject for draping a bank or making a screen over a wall and for such purposes should be more freely used than it is at present. Robert Fortune in 1861 introduced from near Peking, China, a bush form which bears his name and which soon became a popular plant. He also introduced from China in 1844 another species which was named F. viridissima, a relatively small shrub with erect branches and rich yellow hanging blossoms. Unfortunately, it is less hardy than F. suspensa and its varieties. About 1880 a hybrid between F. suspensa and F. viridissima was raised in Europe and named F. intermedia. This hybrid is more beautiful than either of its parents and, moreover, has given rise to a number of forms which take rank as the best of the tribe. The finest of all is the variety spectabilis, which has large, very deep yellow blossoms borne in the utmost profusion. The habit of the plant is fountain-like and those who want one Forsythia and the best need look no further than spectabilis. There is a pale yellow form named pallida, but this is scarcely so fine as the variety primulina, a chance sport which originated in the Arboretum some years ago. As its name suggests, this has primrose-yellow blossoms.
The Nanking Cherry (Prunus tomentosa)
For many years the whole Forsythia family was considered to be purely Oriental but in 1897 a species was discovered in Albania and named F. europaeae. Its interest is more botanical than horticultural, although it is by no means an ill-favored shrub. Of stiff, upright habit, it has pale grayish twigs and large, light yellow blossoms. It is, perhaps, the tallest of the Forsythias but with age becomes gaunt in habit. In recent years Korea has added to the list of Forsythia species and since the climate of that country is severe the plants native there have great value for New England. Frequent mention of F. ovata has been made in these Bulletins. This year the plants in the Arboretum have flowered very profusely and the fear that it was a shy bloomer has now been definitely laid to rest. The hybridists would be well advised to start using this most hardy of all the Forsythias.

This year F. saxatilis, another Korean species, has blossomed in the Arboretum for the first time. This has ascending branches, canary-yellow blossoms with widening lobes more star-shaped than the usual Forsythia flower. It is too early to appraise the garden value of this newcomer but it appears promising. This species differs from the rank and file of Forsythias in having leaves slightly hairy on the under surface. Hairiness is a character which appears in many genera of the family Oleaceae to which the Forsythias, like the Lilacs, belong and would appear to be a family rather than a generic, much less specific, peculiarity.

Acer saccharum, the Sugar, Mountain, or Rock Maple, is now flaunting its tasselled primrose-yellow blossoms. On the first trees to blossom the flowers appear here and there but the plant never makes the brave show of blossoms that do certain of its relatives. It is, however, of all Maples, most dear to the people of New England and other parts of this country. As a source of Maple Sugar it needs no comment, for this toothsome subject is known and appreciated far and wide. The Indians were well acquainted with the sugar producing character of this tree and taught the French settlers how to convert the sap into sugar. It is one of the largest growing of its tribe, trees, 120 feet tall with massive, ascending branches being common. Its brilliant tinted foliage is one of the features of autumn landscape, the hues varying from shades of orange and scarlet to richest crimson. Indeed, no one tree contributes more to the autumn color of New England and lower Canada than does the Sugar Maple. Its economic value appealed to the early settlers and so, too, did its ornamental features. With the exception of the American Elm no tree was more commonly planted by them both in town squares and along roadsides. Today for country districts these two remain the best of native trees but in manufacturing towns they should not be planted for the gas and smoke laden atmosphere of such cities are poisonous to them. Widespread in this country and producing seedlings possibly more freely than any other species, strange to say, the Sugar Maple is almost impossible to cultivate in the British Isles, where only one or two indifferent specimens exist.

E. H. W.