Forsythias. Probably no hardy shrubs which have been introduced from the Old World into our gardens can equal or surpass the Forsythias in cheerful beauty, which is developed at a season when there are comparatively few other competitors so attractive. The beautiful golden glow of their early bloom attracts and pleases almost everyone who is acquainted with them, and they are destined to have wide popularity because of their attractive flowers, generally clean foliage, and comparative freedom from insect or fungous diseases. More important still as a circumstance in favor of popularity and wide distribution is the fact that the Forsythias may be propagated by division with greater ease or facility than most other trees or shrubs cultivated in our gardens. Least trouble will be found by propagating from cuttings of the ripe wood taken in fall or winter or very early spring and planted in the open ground. Of course where the ground freezes in winter and cuttings are taken at that season they may be kept fresh by heeling in or burying in moist earth in a cellar or pit until seasonable time to plant out. Good sturdy well rooted plants should develop before the following autumn. Propagation may also be effected by taking green cuttings in summer and growing them in a frame, a method entailing more trouble or labor than when cuttings of ripe wood are used.

As in nature’s methods propagation may be easily brought about by the process of layering, and it will be found that a slender arching species, like Forsythia suspensa, commonly forms roots on the stems or tips, where they touch the ground, in this way forming new plants on the periphery of the original stem. Thus a single plant of an arching or trailing species may in time cover a large area if no competing plants interfere. The facility with which this genus of plants may be propagated makes their dissemination or distribution almost independent of the commercial nurseryman, excepting in the case of newly introduced species or improved forms which are new or little known.

Forsythias require little pruning except to cut away weak or old stems. It should be remembered that flower buds are formed during
the preceding summer, so that cutting back of the stems should be done immediately after flowering in spring. Pruning in autumn or winter involves the destruction of some of the best flowering branches for the next spring.

If it is desired to raise plants from seed it must be borne in mind that the resulting plants are not always just like the parent and some may be inferior. The seeds of Forsythias are large, flat and somewhat winged and are probably only disseminated by wind agency, or by being carried by water or moving soil during freshets.

All of the known species of Forsythia have yellow flowers, varying somewhat in size, form, and shade of color of blossoms in different species and varieties. To the botanist and close observer of Nature the flowers have peculiar interest in the fact that where grown from seed some plants have short styles (microstyle) while in others the styles are longer and more prominent (macrostyle). This is a provision of Nature to insure cross pollination of the species. The general habit of growth of the various types is one of the most important features to be considered by the planter.

The Forsythias have been described as hardy but there is a limit to their endurance of such cold as we often have in northern New England. While the plants may endure lower temperatures, in some cases the flower buds are very likely to be destroyed if subjected to a temperature of 15 or 20 degrees below zero (Fahrenheit). In a climate like that of the interior of northern New England, or that which prevails at Montreal or Ottawa, Canada, the Forsythias may be classed as only half hardy, being killed to snow line, at least, in winter. Occasionally the flower buds have been killed in the Arboretum while the plants have shown little injury. What we call hardiness may in some measure be affected by location, drainage, maturity of wood, length of season and other factors.

The earliest species to flower this season was Forsythia ovata which has been described as the hardiest of the genus. It is not yet well known in cultivation and whether the plants and flower buds will withstand 15 or 20 degrees below zero or lower remains to be proved by thorough test. As growing at the Arboretum it is a rather compact upright or arching bush, 6 to 8 feet high. Its habit is much like that of F. intermedia already well known and superior to F. ovata by reason of its larger, deeper yellow and more profusely produced flowers which, however, may be a week or ten days later.

Forsythia intermedia itself is not considered as a true species but is a hybrid of the rigid upright growing F. viridissima and the more free growing, slender, long-stemmed F. suspensa. Of this hybrid there are several cultivated forms, one of the best and most floriferous being that known as Forsythia intermedia spectabilis. It usually bears an abundance of rich golden yellow flowers. Another form, known as F. intermedia primulina, bears flowers of a pale yellow or primrose color. It is generally considered less desirable than spectabilis except by those who prefer the lighter shade of yellow color.
Those desiring a slender branched or trailing form of Forsythia should select *F. suspensa Sieboldii* which is stated to have been introduced into Europe from Japanese gardens nearly one hundred years ago (1833). There are several forms or varieties of this species in cultivation, a good and common one being known as *F. suspensa Fortunei* (*F. Fortunei* of some catalogues). But, although more floriferous, it lacks the peculiar slender vine-like effect of *F. suspensa Sieboldii* which may be used as a covering for arbors, trellises or as an effective pendulous covering over rocks, walls, etc. In such situations it may grow many yards in length, forming a graceful network or screen.

**Early Flowering Apricots and Cherries.** Altogether these early flowering trees and shrubs passed through the winter with very little injury from winter cold, although there were exceptions. In the Arboretum the Manchurian Apricot, *Prunus mandshurica*, flowered well this year, an event which is by no means annual as the flower buds are so often destroyed by winter freezes which kill the blossoms in Peach and some of the other species of Prunus. The flower buds are pink, the blossoms pale pinkish or white, the fruit yellow and about an inch in diameter. While attractive in flower this species also appears to be one with great possibilities for improvement in its fruit which may become a valuable addition to those we have already domesticated. Its habit of flowering decidedly earlier than the Peach is a factor against it in northern climates, although the tree itself appears larger and much more rugged than the average Peach. It was in full bloom in the Arboretum on April 18th this season. Some of the flower buds were destroyed during the past winter but not enough to affect the general beauty of bloom. Such injury may be ascribed to the fact that our tree under observation is located upon low ground where it may have been subjected to several degrees below zero (Fahrenheit). It is about 25 feet high with a diameter spread of branches of about 35 feet.

This season the Sargent Cherry, *Prunus serrulata sachalinensis*, might have been registered as in fullest bloom about April 22nd, the same date as recorded for full inflorescence of the same tree in 1927. The pink flowers of this species are rather fugacious and their beauty is past within three or four days if the weather is warm. It is a mistake to plant this tree in a small garden, with only eight or ten feet allowed for spread, because if given favorable conditions it may become a tree at least 40 or 50 feet high with an equal spread of branches which may be produced near the ground if allowed to do so or if the tree is not crowded by other competing plants. While the flowers have usually been described as pink there appears to be a good deal of variation in individuals raised from seed, some having flowers almost white, while in others the blossoms may have a rather unattractive light pinkish color. Reproduction for assurance of any particular shade of flowers would appear to require grafting or budding, though such plants may never attain the symmetry or proportions of those raised from seed. A good plan is to secure several seedlings where one is wanted and to select the most desirable one when they flower, disposing of the others.

J. G. J.