

2020
 DELAWARE
 NURSERY & LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION
Plant of the Year

This year marks Delaware Nursery & Landscape Association's Twenty-Sixth Annual Plant of the Year selection. The 2020 Herbaceous plant is *Epimedium* × *versicolor* 'Sulphureum'. The 2020 Woody plant is *Vaccinium corymbosum*. These plants were chosen because they are particularly well suited to thrive in Delaware.

Vaccinium corymbosum Highbush Blueberry

Highbush blueberry is a multifaceted native shrub. Growing to a height of 5 to 8 feet, this upright deciduous shrub has white urn-shaped flowers that bloom in early summer. As a member of the Ericaceae family, it thrives in an acid (pH of 4.8 to 5.2) soil. Blueberries can be grown as ornamentals for their flowers, fruit and spectacular red fall color. They are often cited as a good replacement for the invasive burning



Photo courtesy of Rick Darke



Photo courtesy of Rick Darke

bush. They work well in shrub borders, the woodland edge or as a hedge. Shallow, fibrous roots need constant moisture, but good drainage. Blueberries can also be grown for fruit production. They are self-fertile

but cross-pollination produces larger berries and larger yields. So, it is best to plant more than one variety that will bloom at the same time. Birds love the fruit, so to harvest a significant number of berries, cover shrubs with netting as soon as fruit begins to ripen.

Epimedium × *versicolor* 'Sulphureum' Barrenwort

Barrenwort is a fantastic native groundcover and especially good for dry shade. 'Sulphureum' spreads faster than most other barrenworts and stays evergreen for much of the winter. Spiny-toothed, heart-shaped leaflets on wiry stems form attractive foliage mounds. New leaves usually emerge with a reddish tinge in spring, mature to green, and turn reddish in fall. Short-spurred yellow flowers are borne in racemes above the foliage in early spring. Barrenwort provides a deer and rabbit resistant groundcover for small areas and makes a wonderful edge in a shady bed or pathway.



Photo courtesy of Rick Darke