A Call to Arms

MARCH 1996
I haven't been outside for a month, but my internal horticultural clock is ticking. I know if that temperamental vine, Cobea scandens, is to bloom before frost, the seeds must go sideways into their peat pots now.
Two sweet peas from Thompson & Morgan could get started, a mysterious mauve with “enthralling fragrance” discovered in 1770 by monks—how could I resist? And a pale yellow—how could that be?
The Hamamelis (Witch Hazel) and Viburnum Bodnantense have been in bloom inside for 2 weeks. Now it’s also time to force Forsythia, Chaenomeles (Flowering Quince) and Malus floribunda (Flowering Crabapple). Perhaps Mahonia bealei will have its lemon-yellow fragrant cluster of flowers this year to bring inside. Hellebore foetidus are ready to pick and a few warm days will bring forth Snowdrops, Aconites, and species Crocus.
The Cardinal are pairing up, bird song is back and I’m ready for spring!

Joan Sargent, a longtime member and master gardener who passed away in August 2012; wrote about 24 gardening columns for NCBL through the years for our newsletter. We are reprinting them again.

Cobea scandens, Cup and Saucer vine/Cathedral Bells...is a fast growing vine

The Sweet Peas, might be like the ones she described; above middle is pink Sweet Pea 'Frangant Ripples', and below is a creamy yellow of 'Juliet, both from Thompson Morgan. Left top are Witch Hazel and Viburnum Bodnantense. Under that is Chaenomeles, Flowering Quince.