ADD WINTER INTEREST TO YOUR GARDEN
Pam Miller, Frederick County Master Gardener

If you are an avid gardener like me, you may long for a spot of green in your landscape during our long, cold winter months. Wonderful additions to your winter garden include the Evergreen Lily, Italian arum, and a native Eastern white pine.

*Rohdea japonica*, also known as Sacred Lily or Nipon Lily, boasts cream-colored flowers and broad evergreen basal leaves similar to a narrow-leafed hosta. Depending on the variety, these lilies can grow up to 1-foot tall. This plant spreads slowly, so even though it is not native to the United States, it will not become invasive or take over your garden beds.

Known for their large, bright red berries which provide sharp contrast to their grass-green leaves, *Rohdea japonica* grow in part shade to dense shade, and tolerate both moist and dry conditions. Deer do not seem interested in them, rabbits rarely nibble on them, and slugs generally leave them alone.

Despite these excellent characteristics, the Evergreen Lily is relatively uncommon in Maryland landscapes because of its limited availability. *Rohdea japonica* were precious heirloom plants in Japan, where they became expensive and showy collectibles. They slowly expanded into the United States and are now offered by mail order and at some local nurseries at reasonable prices.

A clump of *Rohdea japonica* can also help control erosion. During Superstorm Sandy, a deluge of rain caused a river of water to rush through my sloped backyard. The plants that held back the most soil and leaves were the clumps of *Rohdeas*.
**Italian arum**

Another basal evergreen that actually grows in the cooler months and disappears during our summers is Italian arum (*Arum italicum*). Similar to rohdeas, these 12-inch plants thrive in shade. Their green and white marbled arrowhead-shaped leaves stand out in winter. Their white flowers are similar to Jack-in-the-Pulpits and their red berries are arranged on a stalk. *Arum italicum* spreads more rapidly than *rohdeas*, but can be easily contained by removing the flowers before they go to seed.

**Eastern White Pine**

A native Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*) also provides an evergreen focus in winter, along with a yearly crop of pine cones for decorating and fireplace kindling. Evergreen trees are natural windbreaks and offer protection to a variety of birds, increasing bird activity at nearby bird feeders, for your viewing pleasure.

So considering adding an Eastern white pine tree, some clumps of Evergreen Lily, and some Italian arum to your garden, and you’ll enjoy a spot of green, lots of red berries, and pine cones all winter long.

*For more information about the Frederick County Master Gardener/Horticulture Program, visit www.frederick.umd.edu/mg or call Susan Trice at the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County office, 301-600-1596. Find us on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/mastergardenersfrederickcountymaryland*

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