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While the spirea deciduous isn't much to look at the rest of the year, it does provide a pop of color at the beginning of spring.

Considered an easy plant to grow, flowering quince blooms in white, pink, apricot and red depending on the variety.

Forsythia blooms very early in spring. This bright yellow arching shrub is often the first color we see in the landscape.

ASK A MASTER GARDENER

A pop of color for spring



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Master Gardener

Question: I need some ideas for adding some early spring color to my yard. What do you suggest?

Answer: We all reach that point at the end of winter where we are so tired of the drab landscape and are just waiting for spring and some respite from the gray!

You've probably noticed over the last few weeks that there are some pops of color in your neighbors' yards or gardens you drive by. Now is a good time to figure out where you would like to put one of the flowering shrubs that will give you a little spirit-lift late next winter or early spring.

Let's talk about a few of the shrubs you might consider adding to your landscape for spring bloom.

Of course, in the Pacific Northwest the most well-known spring bloomers are the rhododendrons and azaleas. Some of these are early bloomers, but for the sake of this article I am concentrating on other flowering shrubs.

Forsythia (Forsythia). This bright yellow arching shrub is often the first color we see in the landscape. It blooms very early in spring and bright yellow flowers line its arching branches. It prefers full sun and a well-draining soil, and does best with annual pruning right after it blooms. Depending on the variety, the shrub can be from 2-10' tall and wide, and is considered a fast grower. It is deciduous, meaning it will lose its leaves each autumn.

Winter daphne (Daphne odorata) Evergreen. Once you smell the heady fragrance of this plant, you'll want to put one near the main walkways in your garden or near your front door. Pink buds open in February and March. The trick to this plant is it needs very well drained soil—no heavy clay. Your soil needs to



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Weigela flowers are tubular and showy in shades of pink, purple, burgundy and white.

be amended if it isn't fast-draining as daphne will not tolerate poor soil. Light requirements and size vary with variety, so be sure to check the label when you're shopping for daphne.

Weigela (Weigela praecox, Weigela florida) Deciduous. Praecox blooms earlier than florida. Prefers sun to part shade. Size varies by variety, but can reach 5-10 feet. Flowers are tubular and are showy in shades of pink, purple, burgundy, and white. Once again, newer varieties have been selected for interesting foliage and more compact size.

Flowering quince (Chaenomeles speciosa) Deciduous. This is an old-fashioned shrub but, thanks to modern plant selection and breeding, there are new varieties that have taken care of some of the less-desirable traits the older varieties had. The newer varieties are mostly thornless ("Double Take" series)

and many are fruitless. They also can be found in much more manageable sizes. You can find varieties with all colors of flowers – white, pink, apricot, red. Quince is considered an easy plant to grow and drought-tolerant once established.

Spirea (Spiraea) Deciduous. Most of us are familiar with the long, arching branches of the Bridal Wreath spirea (Spiraea prunifolia or S. vanhouttei). This plant demands attention with its mounds of fluffy white flowers. Honestly, it isn't much to look at the rest of the year, but does provide that "pop" just when you need it in spring! It can grow as a backdrop along a hedge or fence just fine. It does want full sun and needs some pruning annually.

However, just like the flowering quince, the plant breeders have been busy with this genus of shrubs. There are

many newer varieties, some with very showy foliage. Check out the varieties in the "Double Play" series, for instance.

These are just a few of the shrubs available to shake up your spring landscape. Visit your local garden center or plant sale and make sure you know the plant's needs for light, soil, drainage and care (especially pruning – it is important to know if you should prune before or after flowering or you might never have any blooms!) Happy spring!

Do you have a gardening or insect question? Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners at douglasmg@oregonstate.edu or 541-672-4461 or visit 1134 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Douglas County Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the Oregon State University Extension Service serve the people of Douglas County.