

Spirea

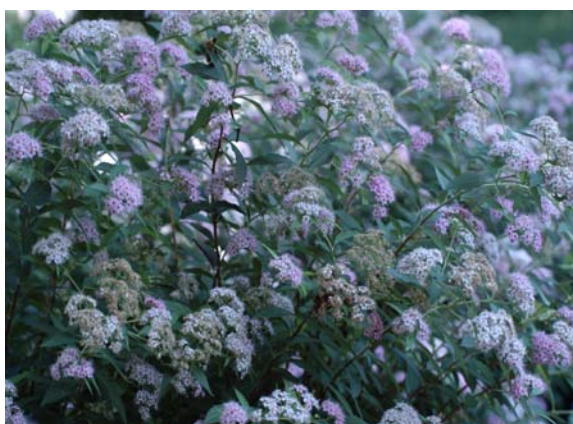
Often overlooked, the Spireas are one of the most prolific blooming shrubs in the landscape during the Spring and early Summer. A member of the rose family, Spireas are some of the easiest woody ornamental shrubs to grow. They have bright green, fine-textured leaves along the stems. I will discuss two distinct kinds of spireas: 1) **Spirea x bumalda 'Anthony Waterer'**, the shrubby, low-growing type has pinkish or reddish to white flowers at the end of upright branches which bloom Summer to Fall. 2) **Spirea canoniensis 'Bridal-Wreath' or Reeve's Spiraea**, has clusters of white flowers on arching branches that bloom in the Spring.



'Anthony Waterer' spirea grows to a height of about three-four feet with a four-five feet spread. The foliage is bright green to red to maroon tinged. Plant during the spring or fall in full sun to partial shade. If planted in the fall, fertilize before the new growth appears in the spring. The **'Anthony Waterer'** makes a good choice for a sunny mixed border, or a low-growing informal hedge for the driveway, sidewalk, or narrow plant bed. **'Anthony Waterer'** has no serious pests, however aphids sometimes occur during the spring. They are tolerant of many soil types except poor draining wet soil. If necessary, prune immediately after flowering otherwise no pruning is required. Can be sheared after flowering, if a more formal look is desired. This hardy plant has an extended bloom season that attracts butterflies. **'Anthony Waterer'** is one of the oldest of the Bumald spirea.



'Bridal-Wreath' or Reeve's Spirea has slender, arching stems with pure white flowers in dense bouquet-like clusters having the appearance of a fountain when in full bloom. The leaves remain on the plant all year and in the fall, they may turn a reddish color. Give this spirea plenty of room because it grows to a height of about six feet tall in full sun or some shade to develop its cascade-like structure. If it receives less than four or five hours of sun, the plant becomes thin and does not flower prolifically. It makes a great specimen planting or hedge mixing well with other early flowering shrubs. Place in front of other green foliaged plants for best flower display in the Spring. Good soil tolerance of slightly alkaline, clay, sand, acidic, or loam. Very little pruning is required, however if a more formal look is desired, shear only after spring flowering. When pruning, remove entire stems.



The flowers are produced on year-old growth therefore it is imperative, when pruning is desired, do it after flowering. Pests are not a concern, however spirea aphid causes leaf curl and is usually found on the shoot tips or in flower clusters. If heavy infestations occur, growth can be inhibited. Fireblight causes leaves to appear scorched, prune out infected stems and avoid using high nitrogen fertilizers.

Interesting tidbits:

- Flower clusters can be used in dried floral arrangements
- There are about 90 species of spirea, mostly in Europe, Asia, and North America
- The genus name Spirea was derived from speiraia and refers to the flexible branches, which were at one time twisted into garlands; hence the name "Bridal-Wreath"