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Toad Lily (Tricyrtis hirta)

This native of India, China, and Japan grows well in light shade along woodland paths. The word “hirta” refers to hairy; the leaves have a soft fuzz and ladder alternately along the stem. It grows in zones 5-9 and blooms late summer until frost.

The orchid-like flower is speckled pink, white, and purple.

It supposedly is called “toad” lily because a Fillipino tribe rubbed the scented, sticky juice of the plant on their hands and arms before going frog hunting.

Another variety, Tricyrtis formosana ‘Blue Wonder” and ‘Dark Beauty’ cultivars, have blooms in shades of blue, yellow, and deep purple.

Callicarpa japonica (Asia Beautyberry)

These stunning purple berries last for several months in the fall. The bush can be 2-4 feet tall and easily as wide, with arching, weeping stems. The berries are found on a small stalks emanating from the stem. The bush should be cut back to 2 feet tall in February or March to encourage heavier berry production.

This plant can be differentiated from the native American Callicarpa Dichotoma which is found mostly in the Southern U.S. by the berriers which arise directly from the arching stems. This is edible, is eaten by birds, and flowers for only a few weeks.