April Hort Report

Today I have brought three varieties of Epimedium. This is one of my favorite spring shade plants because it blooms early, and after it blooms, the decorative leaves look good all summer, and last most of the winter. It’s a great ground cover, spreading quickly by rhizomes. It tolerates dry shade, even under maple trees, and is deer resistant. The only maintenance it needs is cutting the last of the wiry stems back in February or March, before the flowers emerge.

Epimedium x versicolor ‘Sulphureum’ sends its stalks of yellow flowers with spurred petals up first, then the heart shaped leaves begin to grow. The green leaves are tinged with red around the edges until they mature to solid green in summer.

The rare E. x warleyense ‘Orange Queen’ sends its orange flowers, made up of orange-red sepals and spurred yellow petals, up first also.

The third, E. x rubrum ‘Sweetheart’ sends its leaves up first, followed by the pink-looking flowers, which rise above the leaves. The flowers are made up of red sepals and yellow petals, which combine to look pink. These 12-16 inch tall leaves are also ringed with red in the spring, and the leaves turn red in the fall.

I love cutting the flowers and putting them in a tiny vase, as the flower colors, and spurs, are best appreciated up close. They tend to be messy as the sepals and petals fall a few at a time, but definitely worth it to me.

There are many more varieties available, all of them lovely. Some of the common names they can be found under are barrenwort and horny goat weed. Fairy wings and bishop’s hat are names that more accurately describe the beautiful little flowers.