**Forsythia**
*(Forsythia X intermedia)*

**Family:** Oleaceae

**Leaves:** simple, toothed, usually on the upper on-half, long and narrow, smooth; some species with maroon fall color.

**Buds:** opposite, shingled but loosely scaled, pointed, tannish yellow-green, borne several together in the axils.

**Stems:** tannish yellow-green, slightly ridged, prominent lenticels; pith hollow, spongy or chambered depending on species.

**Bark:** tannish yellow-green, warty with lenticels.

**Flowers:** simple, yellow, perfect; very early spring before leaves; may be damaged by winter temperatures (especially above the snowline) or spring freezes.

**Fruits:** insignificant.

**Habit:** irregular with long, pendulous branches; wider than tall.

**Culture:** Very adaptable. Full sun. Hardiness (particularly the flower buds) must be considered when selecting a forsythia cultivar as it varies greatly among cultivars. Sometimes only flower on lower portion of the plant where snow provided flower bud insulation. Prune by renewal or rejuvenation.

**Miscellaneous:** Vivid yellow flowers before the leaves proclaim the beginning of spring. Cut stems are great for late winter “forcing”. Is generally a plant of single season interest although the better cultivars have burgundy fall color.

**Cultivars:** Selected for smaller size, flowerbud cold hardiness and flower color.

- **‘Northern Gold’** - A cultivar of more upright habit (6—8’) and flower buds that are hardy to at least -30°F. **‘Meadowlark’** - Flower buds that are hardy to at least -35°F produce large bright yellow flowers. A large growing cultivar (8—10’) with maroon-purple fall color. **‘Sunrise’** - An excellent selection with an attractive mounded form that is more compact (4—6’). Flower buds are hardy to approximately -26°F. Develops an attractive maroon fall color.

**Related species:** **Forsythia viridissima ‘Bronxensis’** - suckering for massing, irregular flowering, small flowers; leaves stacked in pairs alternating up stems.
‘Northern Gold’

‘Sunrise’

‘Meadowlark’

_F. viridissima_ ‘Bronxensis’

Credits: Photos from: www.midwestlandscapeplants.org and various other .edu websites unless noted. Text from: “Manual of Woody Landscape Plants” by Michael Dirr; “Tree Identification Characteristics (abridged)” from the University of Illinois Extension; www.midwestlandscapeplants.org; and misc. other sources. This publication may not be sold except to cover the cost of reproduction when used as part of an educational program of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.