

Fall Bloomers

Gardeners spend a lot of time preparing for spring and summer, as warm weather draws us outdoors. Fall is also a wonderful time for blooming plants, often providing a grand finale before frost arrives. There are many carry-overs from summer's garden. Some will bloom well into fall if they are deadheaded and kept watered. Some late blooming perennials, with color information, are:

Toad Lily (*Tricyrtis hirta*) thrives in partial shade, producing clusters of white to pale lilac flowers with purple speckles, from late September until frost. Some varieties, such as *T. formosana*, have patterned leaves.

Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*) is great for moist areas. It is a tall plant, with large white, blue or purple whorled flowers. It makes a great background flower in the fall garden.

Stonecrop (*Sedum*) does well in average soil, with full sun. Varieties with fall interest are 'Autumn Joy' and 'Frosty Morn', which have light pink to white flowers, and 'Ruby Glow,' with deep red flowers.

Goldenrod (*Solidago*) needs dry, well-drained soil and full sun. It has lovely sprays of yellow flowers ranging from lemon to deep buttercup in hue. It provides a wonderful accent to the fall garden and blooms well into October. Many gardeners shy away from goldenrod, due to its erroneous reputation for causing allergic reactions (which in fact is probably because it blooms at the same time as ragweed).

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) grows well in moist, nearly wet soil. It should be planted in semi-shade to full sun and it will produce brilliant red spikes from late summer to mid-autumn.

Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum x morifolium*) comes in many flower forms, colors and sizes. This plant prefers well-drained soil and full sun. This is definitely the queen of the fall garden.

Russian Sage (*Perovskia*) likes dry soil conditions and full sun. It has icy blue fronds of flowers and can actually be termed a sub-shrub. It blooms well into fall.

Hardy Begonia (*Begonia grandis*) grows best in moist, well-draining soil. It has branching, red stems carrying large, smooth, coppery green leaves with red undersides. Flowers are pink or white, carried on drooping clusters. The tops die down after frost.

Anemone (*Anemone japonica*) prefers partial shade and regular watering. There are many named varieties, blooming in single or semi-double flowers in white, silvery pink, or rose.

Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) needs to be in a location that receives full sun. Soil may be average to fertile, with good drainage. Coneflower blooms from early summer well into fall. There are many named varieties, with 'Magnus' having deep purple blooms with orange centers, to 'White Lustre' which has cream-colored flowers with brownish-orange centers.

Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*) is a low maintenance, long-lived perennial, preferring full sun or partial shade. Established plants are fairly drought tolerant. *R. fulgida* variety grows tall, with bright yellow, orange or red, brown-centered flowers.

There are many other plants that bring interest to the garden in fall. Explore the possibilities of asters, bugbane (*Cimicifuga*), or turtlehead (*Chelone*).

Resources

Brenzel, Kathleen Norris, Editor, *Western Garden Book*, Menlo Park, California: Sunset Publishing Corporation.

Wolford, Ron. "Fall-Blooming Perennials Make Your Garden Last Year Round", The GreenLine, Retrieved 5/26/2005 from <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/greenline/00v5/03.html>.

"Fall Blooms" retrieved 5/26/2005 from <http://www.munchkinnursery.com/newsletter/fall-blooms/>.