



A Garden in Autumn

How exciting it is to watch a garden come alive and flourish during the spring and summer in Colorado. New life is born and spectacular displays of flowers, leaves, and fruit grow before our very eyes. Though this experience can be rewarding, there comes a time in late summer when your garden has passed its peak, and plants again begin preparing for their long period of rest. Although this seems like an unlikely time for your garden to have any ornamental value, there are a number of plants that can give you a fascinating fall display.

One of the most simple things one can do to add fall interest to a garden is to choose trees and shrubs that have good fall color. Trees such as the Ginnala Maple (*Acer ginnala*), Ornamental Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), and European Mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*) are some unique trees that will add color to your fall garden. Shrubs can also add fall color such as the Burning Bush (*Euonymus alata*), Black Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), Sumacs (*Rhus spp.*), and Viburnums (*Viburnum spp.*).

Another exciting and often overlooked autumn characteristic of some plants is berries that persist into the winter months. These can add a striking look to a fall garden. Consider plants such as Hawthorns (*Crataegus spp.*), Mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Crabapples (*Malus spp.*), Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster spp.*), and some Roses (*Rosa spp.*) for their ornamental rose hips.

There are also beautifully flowering shrubs and perennials to add interest to a fall garden. Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*), Autumn Joy Sedum (*Sedum telephium*), Mums (*Chrysanthemum spp.*), and Asters (*Aster spp.*) all bloom from late summer into the fall.

Ornamental grasses can also add fall and winter texture to a landscape. Flowers and seed plumes generally extend up higher than the grass and can reach heights of six feet or more. Left uncut, these plumes give your garden a distinctive look through the winter and even into the following spring.

When choosing plants for fall interest, make sure to pay attention to the plants' year-round characteristics such as fall color, fruit, and time of flowering. This will enable you to enjoy the beauty of your Colorado garden all year around!

-- Erin Nissen