

Adding Color and Interest to Your Fall Garden

As the climate changes to cooler fall days and nights in Oklahoma, the appearance of our gardens transitions as well. With just a little planning, the fall garden can maintain color and interest to rival any other season. Selecting the proper shrubs and trees that perform well in Oklahoma's fall climate is key to a successful autumn display. Here are just a few of some favorite choices to add a pop of color and excitement.

Several shrubs that offer a beautiful green display in the summer can provide a lovely fall backdrop as well. The Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) is one such shrub. In addition to its lovely white blooms persisting into the fall, its foliage turns a beautiful ruby color as temperatures drop. Dwarf varieties exist that can be as little as 3-4', while the standard variety can reach 6-8' in height.

In addition to offering a bright lime display in the spring months, the compact kaleidoscope abelia (*Abelia x grandiflora* 'Kaleidoscope') displays an outstanding orange and red variegated hue in the fall. Additionally, its white flowers continue into the cooler months.

Ninebark is another shrub that can brighten up your summer garden with a lovely green display while offering beautiful fall colors as well. An example is the Diablo Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Monlo'), a species that has a deep purple foliage in the fall. It is extremely cold, heat, and drought hardy and can reach up to 10' if not pruned.

Sumac (*Rhus* spp.) is another variety that offers a showy display in the fall. The cutleaf staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina* 'Dissecta') is one

example that offers gorgeous foliage and beautiful red berries that attract a variety of songbirds.

Berries are also a strong feature of the deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*,) a native plant that offers red to yellow berries in the fall. These beautiful berries can remain on the plant into winter if not eaten by wildlife. Male and female cultivars should be planted for fruit production.

Some plants add a touch of interest to the fall garden because of their bark. One example of this is the redosier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*). This large, 7-9' shrub offers a lovely reddish-purple color in the fall that continues to show off in the winter with its stunning red stems.

Another species that can add interest to your garden all year round is the Harry Lauder's Walkingstick (*Corylus avellana* 'Contorta'). This deciduous shrub is a member of the birch family and has interesting, contorted branches that provide appeal all year round.

One final favorite is the Purple Smoketree (*Cotinus coggygria*). This beauty can grow to approximately 15' high and 10-12' wide. It offers deep, warm fall colors with unique "smoky" blooms.

Many other plants are available that can offer fall color and interest to your landscape. When fall color and interest are priorities, it is recommended to select and purchase such plants in the fall season to truly observe what they can contribute to your autumn display.