

## **Best Perennials for Fall Planting in Oklahoma**

Fall is an excellent time to plant perennials, especially in Oklahoma, where cooler temperatures, reliable rainfall, and reduced stress on plants promote robust root development. Perennials planted in fall have the advantage of establishing their roots before the harsh heat of summer, making them better prepared to thrive in the coming year. Here are some of the best perennial plants to consider for fall planting in Oklahoma, focusing on varieties that are hardy, drought-resistant, and well-suited to the state's unique climate.

### **Why Plant in Fall?**

Fall planting is ideal for perennials in Oklahoma because the cooler temperatures help reduce stress on new plants, giving them time to focus on root growth. In contrast to spring planting, where plants need to contend with rising temperatures soon after establishment, fall-planted perennials can develop a strong root system over the winter, which aids in their survival through the hotter months. According to OSU Extension's Fall Gardening Guide, the combination of moderate soil temperatures and consistent moisture levels in fall helps support plant establishment, which is especially beneficial for perennials that need time to root deeply.

### **Top Perennials for Fall Planting in Oklahoma**

#### ***1. Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*)***

Black-eyed Susans are a favorite among Oklahoma gardeners due to their hardy nature and bright yellow flowers that bloom in late summer and continue into fall. This plant can withstand Oklahoma's hot summers and is drought-tolerant once established, making it ideal for gardens that experience extended periods of dry weather. Black-eyed Susans grow best in full sun and attract pollinators, making them an excellent choice for both beauty and biodiversity. The Oklahoma Proven Plant Selections list includes

Black-eyed Susan as a hardy perennial that can handle the state's weather extremes.

## **2. Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)**

Another native favorite, purple coneflower, is recognized for its adaptability to Oklahoma's diverse climates. Known for its vibrant purple flowers and long bloom period, this plant is highly drought-tolerant and low-maintenance. Purple coneflower attracts butterflies, bees, and other beneficial insects, adding ecological value to the garden. It prefers full sun to partial shade and well-draining soil, making it well-suited to the Oklahoma landscape.

## **3. Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*)**

Russian sage is a resilient perennial with silvery-green foliage and tall spires of lavender-blue flowers that appear in late summer and last into fall. This plant is especially valued in Oklahoma gardens for its drought resistance and ability to thrive in full sun. Russian sage grows up to four feet tall, providing height and color to perennial borders. According to the Oklahoma Proven program, this plant's tolerance for heat and dry conditions makes it an excellent addition to any low-water garden.

## **4. Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*)**

Autumn sage is a perennial that bursts into color during the fall months, with flowers in shades ranging from red to pink, purple, and white. This plant is particularly well-suited to Oklahoma's climate due to its heat tolerance and drought resistance. Autumn sage also attracts hummingbirds and butterflies, making it a wonderful choice for wildlife gardens. It performs best in full sun and well-drained soil, and can handle some shade, which is useful in areas with dappled sunlight.

## **5. Sedum 'Autumn Joy'**

Sedums are a group of succulents known for their fleshy leaves and colorful flower clusters. 'Autumn Joy' is particularly popular for its late-season pink flowers that deepen to a bronze hue as fall progresses. This perennial is hardy, drought-tolerant, and works well as a border or groundcover plant in Oklahoma gardens. Sedum thrives in full sun and requires minimal care once established, making it ideal for areas that receive hot afternoon sun.

## **6. Aromatic Aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*)**

Aromatic asters are native Oklahoma perennials that bloom late in the season, providing essential food for pollinators as other plants begin to fade. Their purple-blue flowers and compact growth habit make them a terrific addition to borders, rock gardens, or naturalized areas. Aromatic asters are heat-tolerant and drought-resistant, ideal for Oklahoma's climate. They perform best in full sun with well-drained soil and require little maintenance once established.

## **7. False Indigo (*Baptisia australis*)**

False indigo, also known as Baptisia, is a long-lived perennial that brings a unique blue hue to the garden in early spring, followed by attractive seed pods in the fall. It is a member of the legume family, so it helps improve soil health by fixing nitrogen. False indigo is highly drought-tolerant once established and can handle the intense heat of an Oklahoma summer. It prefers full sun to partial shade and grows up to four feet tall, making it a great focal point in perennial gardens.

### **Planting Tips for Success**

When planting perennials in fall, it is important to provide the right conditions to ensure they establish well before winter arrives. Here are some tips for successful fall planting:

- **Soil Preparation:** Perennials perform best in well-drained soil with plenty of organic matter. Oklahoma's clay soils may need to be amended with compost to improve drainage.
- **Mulching:** Applying a layer of mulch around newly planted perennials helps retain moisture, suppress weeds, and insulate the roots against temperature fluctuations.
- **Watering:** Although fall typically brings more rainfall, newly planted perennials still need consistent moisture to establish their root systems. Water deeply after planting and monitor moisture levels until winter.
- **Spacing:** Perennials often expand as they grow, so be mindful of spacing to avoid overcrowding.

## **Conclusion**

Selecting the right perennials for fall planting can lead to a vibrant and resilient garden that requires minimal maintenance and water. Black-eyed Susans, purple coneflowers, Russian sage, and other hardy plants are well-suited to Oklahoma's challenging conditions. By choosing drought-tolerant, heat-resistant perennials, gardeners can create a landscape that will continue to thrive season after season.

## **References**

<https://extension.okstate.edu/fact-sheets/fall-gardening.html>

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