

Shrubs that Burst into Color for Fall

Learn about what shrubs you can add to your garden to get fresh late summer and fall color for your garden, year after year.

The best gardens have plants that add color and interest in all seasons. Spring and summer are usually pretty simple to fill with color. It can take a bit more planning to keep the garden looking great late summer into fall and winter. However, with a bit of careful plant selection your garden can brim with interest in every season. This article covers some [perennials that will add late summer and fall color](#). Now we are going to concentrate on shrubs.



Shrubs are a natural source for adding late summer and fall colors, after all fall is known for the colorful foliage of deciduous trees and shrubs. However, fall color in shrubs certainly isn't limited to foliage. Flowers, seed pods and berries are additional sources of interest. Today's newer shrubs are powerhouses that can provide interest in multiple seasons. The choices are almost limitless, but here are a few that we feel are especially good performers.

New and improved [Hydrangeas](#) are being introduced every year and it seems like there is at least one that works for any situation. Late summer and fall interest are no different, where [Hydrangea paniculata](#) shines. Two of the best cultivars are '[Limelight](#)' and **Little Lime™**. They start blooming in mid-summer, when they show off lime-green flowers. As the flowers mature they turn white, then light pink, then deep rose and eventually turn cinnamon brown and persist into the winter where they continue to add value to the landscape. 'Limelight' isn't an especially large plant, although under ideal conditions and without pruning it can reach up to 8 feet tall. With yearly pruning, it can easily be kept under 6 feet tall. The better choice, if you are looking for compactness, is **Little Lime™** which tops out at 5 feet tall without pruning. Both are hardy in zones 3 to 9 and do well in part sun to sun. If you are in a climate with hot summers, afternoon shade is helpful more for the impact on moisture than heat. Consistently moist soils will help keep the flowers fresh and looking good for the duration of their bloom. **Fire Light™**, a brand new introduction for spring 2014, is one to watch for the future. The fall flower color is an especially deep pink. Hardy in zones 3 to 8.



It is possible that **Brandywine™** *Viburnum nudum* is the perfect plant. It has glossy foliage which turns dark maroon-red in fall. It blooms with white flowers in spring which become clusters of vivid pink and blue berries in fall. It will have good berry set without a pollinator plant, but adding a pollinator ('Winterthur' is a good one) will really amp up the number of berries. It is a native plant that has good deer resistance and it attract birds. It grows up to 6 feet tall, is hardy in zones 5-9, prefers sun to part sun and does best with moist, well-drained soil. If pruning is necessary, do so shortly after flowering. However, leave the flower clusters so that you are able to enjoy the fall berry display.



Red Wall™ *Parthenocissus* (Virginia creeper) is another native plant with great fall color. The foliage is deep green through spring and summer, then turns fire-engine red in the fall. It does produce blue berries in fall, but it's the red foliage color that is its calling card. It is fast growing and salt tolerant and can quickly turn a fence into a mass of foliage and amazing autumnal focal point. It is hardy in zones 3-9 does best in shade to part shade.



Caryopteris begins flowering in late summer showing off blue to purple flowers through fall. The shrubs are drought tolerant, once established, not very tasty to deer and are attractive to butterflies. They are hardy in zones 5-9, prefer a sunny location and good drainage. **Petit Bleu™** has dark green, glossy foliage and tops out at only 30 inches tall. **Sunshine Blue® II** gets about 4 feet tall and has the added interest of golden yellow foliage all season. The contrast of blue flowers with the sunny foliage is gorgeous. The newest addition to our lineup of *Caryopteris* is **Li**

Miss Sunshine™. This plant was created by crossing **Petit Bleu™** and **Sunshine Blue® II** which resulted in a compact, 36 inches tall, shiny, yellow foliated plant with loads of amethyst-blue flowers. How can you not love that!

Ghost™ Weigela starts out with green foliage and deep reddish-pink flowers in spring. Light pruning will encourage repeat blooming throughout the summer and often a second heavy bloom period in fall. Over the course of the summer the foliage becomes butter-yellow. It is deer resistant, about 5 feet tall, prefers a sunny location and is hardy in zones 4-8. It is best with well-drained soil, but can adapt to a range of soil types.



Itea is an often over-looked native plant with truly outstanding fall foliage color. While other *Iteas* tend to be quite large, **Little Henry®** is well-behaved, getting only 3 feet tall or so. In addition to the brilliant fall foliage, white, lightly scented flowers appear in summer. In nature, it is usually found in moist areas, but once established can be quite drought tolerant. It is a versatile plant, doing well in both sun and shade, although fall foliage color is best when the plant is grown in a sunny locale. It is deer resistant, the butterflies love it and it is hardy in zones 5-9.



Purple Pearls™ Callicarpa (beautyberry) is another shrub that produces a copious show of purple berries in fall that appear after the pink flowers fade away. The foliage is deep green, tinged with purple. The purpling is most pronounced in fall when the berries appear. This shrub is about 5 feet tall, prefers full sun and well-drained soil. It is deer resistant and hardy in zones 6-8.

While *Abelia*, in general, provide fall interest - they begin to flower in mid-summer and continue until frost - **Ruby Anniversary™** is an especially showy fall plant thanks to glossy ruby-red fall foliage. A fairly large plant, up to 6 feet, it is deer resistant, fragrant and attractive to butterflies. It is best in sun

to part sun and is hardy in zones 5-9. From blazing foliage, to pretty flowers and showy berries, shrubs are a great way to add interest to your late summer and fall garden.