

Plants for Fall and Winter Interest

1. Conifers for winter color and structure: Lots to choose from – note all the yellows, blues, and shades of green. Add in a plethora of textures and forms available and there is certainly a nice conifer for every spot in the garden. Many conifers will take on a different color in the cold months adding more interest. A few of our favorites...

Chief Joseph Pines: The holy grail of conifers! Now that is yellow!

Creeping Blue Noble Fir: Soft blue conifer with great creeping habit

Cryptomerias: Japanese Cedars - all kinds of varieties for winter color and cool textures

Fire Chief Arborvitae: Nice orangey/yellow foliage for the garden

Golden Mugo Pine: Bright yellow in winter/green in summer

Golden Spreader Nordmann Fir: Bright yellow needles with good structure

Hinoki Cypress: Rich green textures and some excellent golden cultivars as well

Korean Firs: Ex. Horstmann's Silberlocke', 'Icebreaker', 'Silver Star' – nice silver needles

Larches: Deciduous conifers that turn brilliant golden yellow in the fall

Moonfrost Hemlock: Striking white on green needles, soft texture for shade

2. Broadleaf Evergreens: More evergreen foliage for the garden in winter. Look at all things variegated for cool splashes of yellows or whites for winter interest. Others bloom in the winter like Winter Daphne, Distyliums, Sasanqua Camellia, and Mahonias for hummingbird nectar. These evergreen beauties will add texture and foliage over the dormant season. Bright foliage really pops against all of our typical shades of green and adds year around interest. A few of our favorites...

Abelia: Nice foliage and late blooming as well – Kaleidoscope, Magic Daydream.

Azaleas: Silver Sword has nice silver/white variegation on leaves and spring bloom, also varieties like Girard's Fuchsia and Johanna turn nice purple cast in colder months

Camellia sasanqua and hybrids: Start blooming in late fall and continue over winter – available in a number of colors. Look for the "Ice Angels" series for added hardiness

Daphne odora: Winter fragrant Daphne – lots of cool variegated forms to choose from

Distyliums: Red winter bloom like Witch Hazels but evergreen – great hedge plant or filler

Ericas and Callunas: Heaths & heathers – Erica (Irish Heaths) for bloom in winter and Calluna (Scotch Heather) for winter foliage color and summer bloom

Leucothoe: Great color on Scarletta, Rainbow, Little Flames, Rejoice and other cultivars

Mahonias: Hybrids like Charity, Winter Sun and Arthur Menzies – bright yellow blooms attract hummingbirds in the winter months

Nandinas: Burgundy Wine, Gulf Stream, Bonfire, Obsession, Lemon Lime, Cool Glow Pomegranate and Cool Glow Peach – all easy with colorful foliage

Pieris: Passion Frost, Passion Frost Pink, Little Heath – nice variegated foliage/spring flower

Pyracantha: Bright orange or red berries in fall, persisting into early winter

Rhododendrons: PJM, President Roosevelt, Red Red, R. ponticum “Variegata’, Wine and Roses, Yaks, many others all have cool foliage and nice spring flowers as well

Sarcococca: Winter bloom and fragrance on all flavors low and high

Scallywag Holly: Awesome purple color in winter on dwarf holly with no berries

Skimmia: Easy shade shrub, late winter bloom, be sure to get male and female (for berries) or choose Reeves Skimmia (self-fertile)

Strawberry Trees: Bloom in fall and produce fruits over winter – cool red bark too!

Sundance Mexican Orange: Great yellow foliage/fragrant white bloom in late spring

3. Deciduous Trees and Shrubs: Too many to list here as these provide the stunning fall colors we enjoy every year. Many will also sport a nice crop of berries for additional interest in the dormant season. Here are a list of the exceptional fall color plants but again there are many more...

Aronia ‘Low Scape’: Great color on foliage and fruits for the birds as well

Blueberries: Especially high bush – spectacular fall color & berries too! Evergreen ones like Bountiful Blue, Sunshine Blue & Pink Icing have nice turquoise to purple color over winter

Burning Bush: It is not fall without burning bush!

Cotoneaster: Be sure to look at ‘Autumn Inferno’, a striking fall color plant with heavy berry set as well this time of year

Edgeworthia: Fragrant bloom in winter on Chinese Paperbush

Fothergilla: Outstanding fall color and fragrant white blooms in May/June

Hypericum: Nice shrubby St. John’s Wort around, late summer flower, berries in most any color available. Check out ‘Pumpkin’, ‘Red Star’, and ‘Sangrita’ (red foliage in summer as well)

Jack Frost Maples: New hardier series from Iseli Nursery with stunning fall colors and increased hardiness even for E WA and mountain areas. Final Fire, First Flame, North Wind, Arctic Jade, and Ice Dragon. All great specimen trees for our gardens

Jade Butterflies Ginkgo: Stunning structure and golden color in fall – in fact all ginkgos!

Japanese Beautyberry: Purple berries – new ones like Pearl Glam and Purple Pearls have darker foliage in growing season for added interest

Japanese Maples: All get stunning color – look for bark too like Bihou, Coral Barks, others

Katsura Tree: Awesome fall color and smells like Cotton Candy in fall

Ninebarks: Nice foliage color all spring/summer, intensifying in fall. Interesting peely bark for winter months as well. Good late spring flowers as well

Oak Leaf Hydrangeas: Great fall color, bloom in summer/fall, and nice peely bark

Paperbark Maples: Outstanding fall colors and exquisite coppery peeling bark

PG Hydrangeas: Use for fall flowers turning rose and red – especially Diamond Rouge

Pink Dawn Viburnums: Plant for bright fall color and winter fragrant bloom. Most other Viburnums also have outstanding fall color as well – like Snowball Bush as example

Sourwood Trees: Bloom in September with red fall color – slow growing but worth the wait

Sumac: Spectacular color in fall – Tiger Eyes is nice bright yellow all season as well

Symphiocarpus: Galaxy and Candy, beautiful hybrid snowberries for fall and wildlife

Twig Dogwoods: Great structure and twig color in yellow, red or orange. Love Neon Burst!

Vine Maples: Great natives. Look for ‘Pacific Fire’ with stunning bark color in winter

White and River Birch: Nice bark that peels with age and adds winter interest

Witch hazels: Yellow, orange and red varieties for winter bloom and excellent fall colors

4. Perennials and Winter Color: Add these to winter containers, border plantings, or for a touch of color just about anywhere in the garden over winter. Here are a few of our favorites for fall and winter...

Anemones: Great for fall bloom and they will come back every year

Bergenia/Mukdenia/Mukgenia: Nice foliage on all for fall/winter

Cabbage and Kales: Great structure and color in winter in ground or pots

Epimediums: Great red foliage over winter and nice Bloom in February

Grasses: Evergreen flavors provide year round color and interest, perennial types add wonderful fall plumes as well as color, sound and motion to the landscape

Hellebores: The perfect hardy winter blooming evergreen perennial in all kinds of colors!

Heucheras: Cool foliage in all shades of colors for winter – and evergreen too!

Pansies and Violas: Your flower power for winter – bloom right through the cold

Plumbago: Red in fall with cobalt blue flowers

Wintergreen: Nice groundcover for pots and borders – red foliage and nice berries in winter

Hardy Cyclamens: Excellent foliage and fall bloom – a plant that goes dormant when hot

Do you want a garden for all seasons? Don't forget about the fall & winter – there are a surprising amount of stunning plants to utilize in the dormant season!

Everything does not have to be evergreen! Add some deciduous plants to the landscape and enjoy the colors of autumn!