



"Your Outdoor Source"

2442 State Route 27 – North Brunswick, NJ 08902 – (732) 297-1244 – Open Seven Days

Fall Gardening Tips

Deer-resistant Bulbs

If deer are a problem in your area, this autumn you may want to plant bulbs that deer don't find so tasty. These include daffodils, alliums, and lycoris for bulbs.

There are hundreds of wonderful daffodil varieties to choose from. One great naturalizer that is also outstandingly attractive is '**Ceylon**', which grows 15 inches tall, and produces bright golden petals around an orange cup. Among white varieties, graceful 'Thalia' is hard to beat. Late-bloomers like '**Hawera**', an eight-inch tall daffodil with diminutive lemon blossoms, and '**Actaea**', a daffodil with linen-white flowers punctuated by red and yellow coronas, can fill the garden with grace and fragrance.

Alliums—also known as flowering onions—are perennials that come in all sizes, mostly with clusters of starlike flowers in shades of pink and purple. One of the most spectacular is the giant allium, **Allium giganteum** (USDA Hardiness Zones 6-10, AHS Heat Zones 9-5), which produces a ball of bright purple flowers, six inches across, on a stem that can reach four feet. Equally impressive is Schubert's allium, **Allium schubertii** (Zones 4-10, 10-1), a spidery purple flower ball reaching up to 12 inches across on a 15-inch stem.

Lycoris are hardy members of the Amaryllis family that bloom in late summer and early fall. Naked ladies, **Lycoris squamigera** (Zones 6-11, 12-6), so called because their blooms appear long after the leaves have withered away, bear fragrant, pink flowers on strong, two-foot-tall stems in late July and August.

Late-blooming Asters

While many summer flowers have faded away, asters are one group of plants that blooms late in the garden's final season. The aster parade begins in mid-summer and continues until hard frost, with the great majority blooming in August to September.

Aster carolinianus (Zones 4-8, 8-1) is a late bloomer, unique to the genus. In mid-October, this gray-green leaved aster, native to the southeast, will scramble to the top of a six-foot post or trellis and burst into rose pink flowers that turn lilac with age.

Aster 'October Skies', another late-blooming native, bears colors that mirror the clear autumn skies in October. Unlike many asters, 'October Skies' is short and bushy—growing only about two feet tall. Taller, darker, and later-blooming is '**Fanny's Aster**', which matures into a four-foot shrub stitched with dark purple flowers that open in October and remain into November.



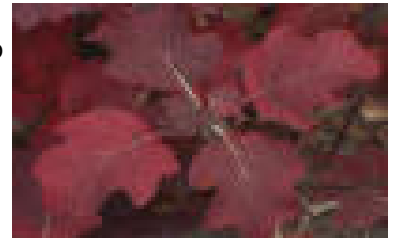
"Your Outdoor Source"

2442 State Route 27 – North Brunswick, NJ 08902 – (732) 297-1244 – Open Seven Days

Fall Color from Shrubs

If you're looking for something to add brilliant fall color at or near ground level in your garden, try the native shrubs Virginia sweetspire, **Itea virginica** (Zones 6-9, 10-7) and oakleaf hydrangea, **Hydrangea quercifolia** (Zones 5-9, 9-5). Both retain their colorful foliage into winter, even when planted in the shade.

The big leathery leaves of oakleaf hydrangea begin turning in October from summer's dark green to myriad tints from bright pink to deep maroon. Oakleaf hydrangeas grow into wider-than-tall colonies with the potential to reach 10 feet in height, but usually topping out at six to eight feet. Their relatively high stature allows them to show off their attractive tawny-colored bark, which can be somewhat hidden along the plant's denser sections by the oaklike leaves.



Virginia sweetspire is shorter, growing three to five feet tall. It grows into a broad mound of arching branches, a habit that makes it useful as a large-scale ground cover. In late spring to early summer, long, white flowers—each composed of hundreds of tiny white bells—appear at the end of the branches. But it is in fall that this shrub is at its best. Some particularly colorful varieties include 'Henry's Garnet', which takes on the deep jewel tones of a garnet; 'Saturnalia', which blends ruby tones with garnets; and 'Little Henry', a lower growing form that peaks at about two feet and bears glowing red leaves.

Improving Your Soil With Autumn's Bounty

At this time of the year, fallen leaves are everywhere—and they're a great, inexpensive source of organic material for enriching your garden soil. Leaves should be shredded to help them break down in the soil more quickly. If you don't have a leaf shredder, rake leaves into long, low piles and then run your lawn mower back and forth over them. Some communities even offer composted leaves to residents free of charge, so check with your local government offices to see if you can take advantage of that wonderful resource.

Japanese Anemones of Note

Ongoing evaluations of Japanese anemone at the Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG) have yielded several promising cultivars. Grown for their mid-autumn blooms, anemones are ideal for borders, woodland, and rock gardens.

The CBG has tested seven cultivars of **Anemone hupehensis** and **A. hupehensis japonica** along with ten cultivars of **A. x hybrida (A. hupehensis x A. vitifolia)**. "The Avant Gardener" newsletter reports that three cultivars of *A. x hybrida* "received top marks": yellow-centered white 'Andrea Atkinson', light pink 'Max Vogel', and pink 'Serenade'.

Of *Anemone hupehensis* and *A. hupehensis japonica* species, four cultivars stood out above the rest: rose pink *A. hupehensis* 'Splendens', double pink *A. hupehensis japonica* 'Prinz Heinrich', light purple *A. hybrida* 'September Charm', and pale pink *A. hybrida* 'Robustissima'.

Fall is the perfect season to enjoy anemones and it is also the season to plant them. Japanese anemones should be planted two inches deep in moist, fertile, humus-rich soil in sun or partial shade. The plants, once established, may sometimes spread by easily removable rhizomes.