

Autumn Blaze Maple:

If you want a large, fast-growing tree with spectacular fall color, Autumn Blaze Maple is an excellent choice. Prized as the fastest growing maple tree with a hardy nature and brilliant color, this tree will grow in a wide range of climates and soil conditions. Growing in a nicely uniform shape, it needs little if any pruning. This is a large tree, reaching 40-50' wide and 40-60' tall.

One of the best features of Autumn Blaze is that it's disease and pest resistant. Once established, in drought conditions, this maple needs only occasional watering. Plant in full sun for the best fall color.

*Note: Amur Maple is another fall color specimen available at local nurseries. Amur Maple has invasive traits that enable it to spread aggressively. It is under observation and may be listed on official invasive species lists in the near future. One tree can produce more than 5,000 two-winged seeds that are widely dispersed by wind, displacing native shrubs and understory trees. Not recommended for planting. *Source: USDA Plant Guide*



Purple Smoke Tree Bush:

A beautiful way to add unique color to the landscape is the Purple Smoke Tree Bush. Growing 10' to 13' its outstanding feature is the purple flower panicles that create a smoky appearance when seen from a distance, hence its name. The smoke tree bush grows best in a full sun (at least six hours of direct sunlight each day) to partial shade (three hours of direct sunlight each day) location. The more sun the smoke bush receives the better the bloom production and the fuller the plant. Smoke bushes planted in full shade tend to be lanky.



The smoke bush is highly adaptable to different soils. It will grow in sand, loam, part clay, or thick clay. It will tolerate a variety of soil moisture levels, but will grow best in moist, well-drained soil. The smoke tree bush can be pruned as a large shrub or trained into a small tree form. If pruning into a screen or hedge, selective pruning in the fall allows the bush to create numerous trunks and dense lateral growth. This cold-hardy plant is very drought tolerant when established; an excellent specimen for xeriscape landscaping.

Lilacs:

Lilacs are among the most beautiful of all deciduous flowering shrubs. Use as a single specimen or early season focal point at some far point of the garden. Closer in, plant where the heady fragrance is best enjoyed. In side yards and as hedges dividing houses the windows can be open for the floral scent to waft indoors. Large plants make excellent backgrounds for perennial borders. Use to mark a gateway or entry where you pass by the blooms going in and out.



Lilacs require a sunny spot with well-drained, neutral to slightly alkaline soil. In addition to selecting a spot that is large enough to accommodate the mature size of your plant (8' to 10'), choose a location with good air circulation to reduce the likelihood of powdery mildew, a fungal disease that covers the foliage with a gray-white powder but is usually not life threatening. To reduce powdery mildew, spray plants with horticultural oil, following label directions, in summer after they have bloomed.

Early spring and fall are the best times to plant. Water young plants regularly until established. Mature lilacs need infrequent watering, except during droughts. Feed plants with an all-purpose fertilizer after pruning, and dress them with compost mulch each spring.

Mature lilacs won't bloom if they do not receive enough sun (at least 6 hours daily) or if they have not been pruned correctly. Young lilacs can take up to 3 years to reach maturity and bear flowers, but once established, they need pruning only to promote flowering, to reshape, and to remove unwanted suckers. Unless they have been long neglected, lilacs rarely need more than regular deadheading and some reshaping in early summer after they bloom.

Because lilacs form their flower buds in summer for blooms the following spring, it's best to deadhead just after flowers fade and to prune before July 4. Remove the large, unattractive seedpods and prune out any dead, damaged, or diseased branches, cutting just above a bud. Suckers (shoots that emerge from the base of the plant) should be thinned regularly or removed as necessary to maintain the plant's shape.

Dwarf Burning Bush:

One of the most highly sought after colors for fall foliage is flaming, fire-engine red. You will find it on some trees, but it's not that easy to find on a shrub. The Dwarf Burning Bush is a shrub that proudly wears its scarlet color and lives up to its 'burning bush' moniker. It nearly glows in the garden.

The part of its name it doesn't live up to is the 'dwarf/compacta'. This shrub can grow to be a whopping 10 feet tall or more! Fortunately, it takes well to pruning and can be kept at a more petite size. Spring to summer your Burning Bush will have rich, green leaves up to 3 inches long. In the spring small, yellow green flowers appear adding interest to this extremely popular shrub. Once established, this deciduous shrub is remarkably drought tolerant. It adapts well to a variety of soils and climates.



Even though the Burning Bush 'Compacta' will grow happily in a semi-shady area, it needs whole days of full sun to develop those amazing red leaves in the fall, so choose your site carefully. Make sure it's someplace where you and your neighbors can enjoy its dramatic display.

Neon Flash Spirea:

The Neon Flash Spirea is a fast-growing, small ornamental shrub. Its name refers to its flashy hot-pink clusters of flowers that will appear in the spring. Those flowers will continue to delight with their brilliance into early summer, attracting a variety of butterflies to your yard.

The Neon Flash is all about color, even beyond its pink flowers. Even the 5 inch long, lance-shaped leaves demonstrate color when they appear in the spring with a reddish hue. Those leaves become fully green during the summer months, but then again provide a show of color in the fall with a deep burgundy.



The Neon Flash can grow up to 3 feet tall with an equal spread. It's multi-stemmed and will grow to a somewhat rounded form without any pruning. When left to grow naturally, it fills out all the way to the ground with a full and lush form.

For best performance and color, plant in full sun, but it will tolerate partial shade. Most varieties flower in June and July and again later if pruned back. Follow a regular watering schedule during the first growing season to establish a deep, extensive root system and provide supplemental weekly watering during dry spells.

Butterfly Bush: (Buddleia)



Butterfly bush blooms from early summer well into fall. The numerous individual blossoms are deep pink and contained on flower spikes. At maturity the plants reach 48-60 inches in height by 36-48 inches in width and exhibit a mounded growing habit. Leaves are a gray-green color.

Grow in full sun and in well-drained, loamy soil enriched with humus. Drought-tolerant once they have a chance to become established, make sure you water these plants during times of extreme heat. Water the shrub slowly and deeply during prolonged dry spells so that the soil absorbs the water deep into the root zone

Many people wonder, "When should I prune my butterfly bush? The first thing you need to know is that Buddleia blooms on new growth. Although some people prune in late fall, others prefer to leave the brown branches in place during most of the winter (they will provide some winter protection for the roots below) and prune the plants back to 6-12 inches in early spring (March in our area). Butterfly bush begins to re-emerge from its root system in spring. Pruning is actually optional but does seem to promote better flowering.

Arctic Fire Red Twig Dogwood (compact):



This compact variety of Red Twig Dogwood has dark red stems that provide a spectacular show in the otherwise dull winter landscape. Unlike most varieties that reach 8 to 10 feet tall, Arctic Fire grows to only 3-4 feet. Great as a foundation plant or at the back of a border, it is simply one of the best dogwoods to come along.

Tolerates a wide range of soils and is one of the most shade-tolerant ornamental shrubs. Easy to care for, this plant does like some additional water during dry spells. The cut stems are highly desirable because of the deep, dark red stem color during the winter dormancy period. They are used in urns and pots outdoors for winter and holiday decorations adorning your front entrance or in your garden. They can also be cut and used indoors for winter and holiday décor.

If you are cutting the stems for winter decoration, remove the 2-year-old stems down to the ground (in November) so new shoots come up from the base keeping those stems vivid red. Older stems will not exhibit the great color and those should be removed each spring to the ground to keep the plants vigorous and colorful.