



a pop of color

Many bushes and trees produce red berries perfect for holiday decor

CAROL DALU
Master Gardener

Question: Now that it is the holiday season, I see lots of faux red berry decorations and really like the bright color they add to the greenery. Can you provide information on plants I can add to my yard that would produce red berries in the winter?

Answer: The eye-catching color of red is a really nice addition to the landscape, especially in winter when our skies are a little grey and most everything in the garden seems to be sleeping. I am happy to share with you that there are quite a few options for plants that will grow in our area and produce red berries in winter, including trees, shrubs and ground covers. Either evergreen (stays green year-round) or deciduous (sheds its leaves in the fall) – there is something for everyone.

Many of these plants produce berries on branches that can easily be trimmed and brought inside for holiday decorations, providing that nice pop of color. You may also prefer to enjoy them in the garden from the view out a window; when choosing a planting location, consider how the plant will be seen from inside so that it is not hidden from your view while in its full winter berry glory. An added



PIXABAY.COM PHOTOS

Mountain ash, in top photo, holly, above, and Japanese barberry, right, produce bright-red berries.

benefit of berries is they are also a wonderful source of food for birds in the winter months.

See the side bar at right for a sampling of winter berry options.

If considering a berry-producing tree in your landscape, placement and the potential impact of the dropped berries is something to plan for, as some can be quite messy on patios or walkways, and may stain surfaces.

I hope one or more of these shrubs

and trees will provide you the red berries and the bright pop of color to enjoy in your winter garden.

Do you have a gardening question? Please e-mail, call, or visit the Douglas County Master Gardeners Plant Clinic at douglasmg@oregonstate.edu, 541-236-3052, or 1134 S.E. Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Douglas County Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the OSU Extension Service serve the people of Douglas County.

SHRUBS:

- **Red Chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*):** tall deciduous shrub with leaves that turn bright red before dropping and revealing clusters of bright berries; a popular variety is "Brilliantissima."

- **Holly (*Ilex*):** evergreen shrub or tree that is known for its use in holiday wreaths; many are either a male or female plants and require both in the garden to produce berries, however, there are self-fruiting varieties such as "Van Tol" (*I. aquifolium*) or "Burford" (*I. cornuta*).

- **Winterberry (*Ilex*):** also a holly, with oval leaves that have softer edges; it is deciduous and requires both male and female plants to produce berries.

- **Heavenly Bamboo (*Nandina domestica*):** evergreen to semi-evergreen shrub with a delicate, lacy look similar to bamboo, with pinkish-white blossoms that turn to shiny red berries (note, these berries can be toxic to birds, so you may consider cutting them off before they ripen).

- **Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*):** deciduous and produces beadlike berries on slender arching, spiny branches.

- **Cotoneaster:** evergreen, semi-evergreen and deciduous with varieties that may be a low-growing ground cover, or a shorter to very tall shrub; produces clusters of berries on long arching branches.

TREES:

- **Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*):** native evergreen common in our area, and has reddish-brown bark with bright-orange to red berries.

- **Strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*):** evergreen with red-brown shedding bark, clusters of small white flowers that turn to yellow then red berries that look similar to a strawberry; popular varieties include "Elfin King," "Compacta" and "Oktoberfest."

- **Mountain ash (*Sorbus*):** large deciduous tree; several varieties will grow in our area.

- **Green Hawthorn (*Crataegus viridis*):** deciduous, "Winter King" is a popular variety with silvery stems and red berries.

