

Bursts of summer color



Janet Bitter
Master Gardener

QUESTION: I have a flower bed that looks great until mid-summer, but then blooms fade and it's not very attractive. It gets full sun and is mostly perennials. What could I plant that would give me some color all the way through fall?

ANSWER: That is a great question for this time of year because we are in prime planting time for all kinds of perennials.

Let's talk about a few of my favorite mid- to late summer perennial flowers you might consider adding to your garden. All of the following prefer full sun and are easy enough for beginning gardeners.

Remember that perennials, by definition, will come back year after year. Most of these will bloom from mid-summer all the way through early autumn.

AGASTACHE (common names include *hummingbird mint*, *giant hyssop*). If you want to attract some hummingbirds, this is a great plant to add! It is also resistant to deer and is drought tolerant once established.

The flower colors available range from purples to apricot to pinks. The flowers are tubular along spikes 1-3 feet tall. Make sure you get a variety that is good for our climate zone as some may be a little tender for our coldest winter temperatures.

ASTER (common name *michaelmas daisy*). Daisy-like flowers can be found in shades of purple, pink and white. Asters are deer resistant, prefer sun to partial sun. Good cut flower. Prune down one-half to two-thirds in early to mid-June to strengthen the stems and prevent them from flopping over during flowering. There are many species, ranging from 1-3 feet high. Asters need regular water.

MONARDA (common name *bee balm*). This is another plant that is great for attracting pollinators. Bee balm tolerates clay soils and likes moist conditions (not soggy) and is also resistant to deer. Colors range from red to pinks to lavenders. Height can be up to 4 feet but there are compact varieties available. This one can become slightly invasive, so be sure and divide it every couple of years to keep it in check. It should be cut to the ground after flowering.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXABAY

Asters are daisy-like flowers that can be found in shades of purple, pink and white.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BONNIE COURTER

Rudbeckia produces profuse yellow to orange daisy-like blooms.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXABAY

Ranging from purple to apricot to pink, agastache attracts hummingbirds but is also deer resistant.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXABAY

Ranging in color from reds to pinks to lavenders, monarda are great for attracting pollinators.

RUDBECKIA (common name *black-eyed susan*). A member of the sunflower family, it produces profuse amounts of yellow to orange daisy-like blooms and is resistant to deer. Many types are available and water needs vary by species, so check before you buy. Good cut flower. Re-seeds readily.

PEROVSKIA (common name *Russian sage*). This plant has recently been reclassified as *Salvia yangii*, so you could look for it either under this name or the *Perovskia* genus name. Billowy purple spikes on plants 1-4 feet tall. Russian sage is drought resistant and will grow in poor, rocky soil. Must have good drainage. Deer do not bother this plant. Beautiful in

beds as filler in between other tall plants. Divide clumps every four to six years.

ECHINACEA (common name *coneflower*). This member of the aster family has daisy-type flowers with a spiky center. Another great plant for pollinators. Normal water and they prefer full sun to light shade. With some of the newer hybrids the color selection ranges from pinks and purples to oranges, reds and yellows. I always leave some of my flower heads standing in the fall because birds love to eat the seeds.

These are just a few suggestions. When you shop for a new plant, make sure you are buying a variety that is good for our climate zone. If you shop

at our local nurseries, they will stock plants that perform well in our area.

The Douglas County Master Gardeners' annual Plant Sale Expo is Saturday at the Douglas County Fairgrounds, 2110 Frear St., Roseburg. We will have a good variety of perennials available as well. Happy planting!

Do you have a gardening or insect question? Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners at douglasmg@oregonstate.edu or 541-672-4461 or visit 1134 S E Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Douglas County Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the Oregon State University Extension Service serve the people of Douglas County.