

## Fall-Blooming Perennials



Is the color in your perennial garden fading along with the summer? Dramatic spaces don't have to turn drab just because we turn the calendar from August to September. Now is a great time to brighten up your borders with late-flowering perennials. There are many that would love to be the stars of your landscape from late summer into fall.

### For Sun

If I could choose just one fall-blooming plant for every garden, it would be Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium* spp.). Varieties of these impressive plants grow from 3 to 7' tall (or taller), and bear showy clusters of flowers from late summer through September. My favorite is 'Gateway' – a variety that grows 5 to 6' tall with reddish stems and huge seductive clusters of dark mauve flowers.



Joe Pye Weed

Many fall-blooming perennials continue through September in shades of white, lavender and pink. While some varieties may spread a little more than you'd like, Miss Manners is as her name implies – mannerly. She holds her white blooms over a foliage that stays where it is planted.

The flowers of Boltonia resemble the flowers of an aster but are covered with pink or white flowers on sturdy, 3 to 4-foot plants. Because most of its blooms are found on the top part of this plant, you will want to plant this beauty towards the back of the border.

Sneezeweed (*Helenium* spp.) also has daisy-like flowers, but hers are larger - about 2 to 2 1/2" wide. Sneezeweed can be found in a variety of fall shades, from rich gold to deep red-bronze. Equally attractive in the border or as a cut flower, most varieties grow from 2 to 3 feet tall.

If you're not a fan of daisy-like flowers, choose Obedient Plant (*Physostegia* spp.) The plant is narrow and upright, but it gets its common name from the tendency of its snapdragon-like flower spikes to stay where they are bent. Blooms start in August and

continue through September in shades of white, lavender and pink. While some varieties may spread a little more than you'd like, Miss Manners is as her name implies – mannerly. She holds her white blooms over a foliage that stays where it is planted.

Everyone loves the blue flowers of Leadwort (*Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*). This front-of-the-border plant stays low only reaching 8 to 12". Its glossy green foliage is topped with gentian blue flowers from mid August into October. As the season progresses the foliage takes on red tones - a stunning contrast to the blooms. Next spring, be patient for Leadwort to show itself. It is very late to break dormancy.

False Sunflower (*Heliopsis* spp.) is a long-blooming perennial that is drought tolerant once established. It starts flowering in July and continues well into September, contributing brilliant yellow and gold shades to the garden. Flowers attract butterflies and are excellent cut flowers.

Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.) is often falsely accused of causing hay fever (because it blooms at

the same time as the real culprit - fall color, brighten it with some exquisite pink or white blooms (ragweed), but it is a hardy and late-flowering Monkshood may be single or double. They showy perennial that deserves a ( *Aconitum* ). The showy bloom abundantly on wiry stems spot in any garden. Its flowers flowers of these statuesque above handsome, dark green, are a brilliant, golden yellow - plants resemble those of clump-forming foliage. perfect for fall. They cut well, too, Delphiniums in both color and so add some to fall arrangements. Toad Lily ( *Tricyrtis* spp.) is an underused perennial that deserves more attention. It bears

There are many Sedums that exotic, orchid-like flowers in late have beautiful foliage all season Turtlehead ( *Chelone* spp.) is a August to September. It often long, but proudly present flowers long-blooming perennial with sports unusual foliage as well. from late summer into fall. There robust pink to white snapdragon- Lightning Strike is a variety with is the classic Autumn Joy, with its like flowers on sturdy stems. gold-streaked foliage and spotted impressive dark pink flower Attractive to hummingbirds, it lavender flowers. Gilt Edge has heads and sturdy succulent thrives in moist, partially shaded creamy-edged green foliage and foliage. I love Bertram Anderson. sites and grows 2 to 3 ' tall. lavender-speckled flowers. Plant Its dusty blue foliage is the toad lilies close to the house or a perfect backdrop for the mauve Japanese Anemones are walkway where you will enjoy flowers. Or try Neon, with brighter beautiful flowers that also prefer their lovely flowers up close. electric pink flowers. a semi-shaded site. Their showy

### **For Shade**

If your shade garden is short on continue throughout the fall. The