

## Favorite Fall-Blooming Perennials

Has summer's heat and humidity taken its toll on the plants in your landscape? Is the color in your garden winding down? Don't give up and head back into the house – plant one of my three favorite fall-blooming flowers and your garden will bloom its way through October.

### Anemones

Japanese Anemones (*Anemone japonica*) are beautiful flowers that prefer a semi-shaded site. In Greek mythology, the Anemoi were the gods of the wind. Also commonly called windflowers, the name suggests the wind blows the petals open and later, after they have died, blows them away.

Their showy flowers start blooming in late August to September and continue throughout the fall. The stunning blooms are borne profusely on wiry 2 to 4-foot stems above dark green, maple-like foliage.

Give Japanese anemones a compost-rich, moist but well-drained site and they will quickly spread to fill a spot in your garden. They are not palatable to deer. Once you have a stand of these delightful plants in your garden you will never want to be without them regardless of the variety you choose.

Bodnant Burgundy sports large, burgundy flowers with yellow centers. Honorine Jobert tops his tall, wiry stems with pure white flowers. Silvery pink flowers are suspended above the foliage of September Charm.

Robustissima is another member of the anemone family (*Anemone vitifolia*). It is the most vigorous and most adaptable of the anemones that bloom in the fall. Its attractive buds open to reveal china pink flowers.

### Asters

Asters are another staple in the fall garden. They are very easy to grow as long as you give them lots of sunshine. Asters are a butterfly magnet and bloom in a range of colors from white to blue and purple to red. There are hundreds of cultivars available in local garden centers today. In the spirit of full disclosure, aster can lose their lower leaves leaving stems exposed. I just plant shorter annuals or perennials around them for cover.

Purple Dome is covered with deep purple flowers and only reaches up to 18 inches tall. Vibrant Dome is similar in size and shape, but blooms profusely with raspberry-pink flowers.



If you're looking for a taller aster, choose Raydon's Favorite. It grows up to 3 feet tall and has aromatic foliage. Fine-textured, blue flowers glow in my garden as it continues to bloom until frost.

Jindai is my favorite aster. Large, tobacco-like leaves emerging in spring form a nice backdrop for finer-textured perennials. Late in fall, strong 4-foot stems are topped with

clusters of yellow-centered blue flowers. Jindai spreads by rhizomes and has formed a weed-choking colony near the back of one of my sunny borders.

## Sedum

My fall gardens wouldn't be complete without Sedums. They require very little maintenance and easily withstand drought. Their deer-resistant, succulent foliage is attractive all season long. Although they don't boom until fall, their flower buds form early. And after their flowering has finished, they provide interest all winter.



Because sedums are always attractive, they can be used anywhere in the landscape where there is lots of sun and average to dry soil. Use the shortest varieties as edging plants, taller ones in the middle of the border or as specimen plants. They are also excellent choices for container gardens. Combine them with other drought resistant varieties.

Autumn Joy has become a classic in many fall plantings. It grows up to 2 feet tall and wide and offers flowers that open pink and mature an autumn-appropriate coppery-red. Autumn Joy is perfectly paired with ornamental grasses.

Brilliant stays a little shorter, but bursts into bloom with seriously huge flower heads in a brighter, clearer pink than most other sedums. Bigger flowers not only mean a bigger punch of color in the landscape, but also more flower for butterflies to love.

A couple of my favorite sedums for the front of the garden are *Sedum sieboldii* and Angelina. *Sedum sieboldii* grows in a perfect mound of arching silvery-blue stems; Angelina has striking, brilliant golden, needle-shaped foliage.

The color in your landscape doesn't have to end along with summer – plant some fall-bloomers and the show can go on!

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