

PERCEPTIONS IN LANDSCAPE

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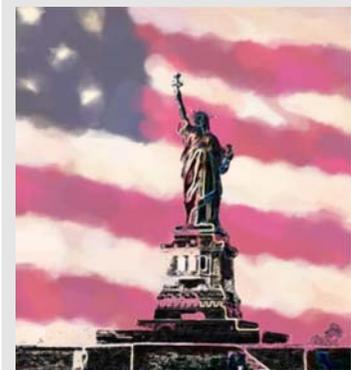
The "ABC's" of Composting

Autumn is the time of year when most of us have to deal with an onslaught of leaves falling to the ground. Disposing of them often presents a challenge. These days, many people have taken to composting, not only as a means of reducing landfill usage, but as a way of creating a rich and renewable source of nutrients for the garden. A compost pile can be started any time of the year by following 3 easy steps.

Step A: Compost heaps work by generating intense heat and biological activity, breaking down all the materials included into a rich organic substance. To hold your compost, use an inexpensive, prefabricated compost bin or construct your own at home.

Step B: Fill your compost heap with three substances in alternating layers four to six inches deep: leaves, grass clippings, plants and other organic material: cottonseed meal, chemical fertilizer or other nitrogen-rich substances; and garden soil mixed with ground limestone or wood ashes. Don't include diseased or infested plant materials, fats or meat scraps, and don't build a heap exceeding five feet.

Step C: A compost heap will start to work four to six days later, after it reaches 140-160 degrees at its core. After five to six weeks, use a shovel to turn the outside of the material into the center of the pile, and apply water if the heap is dry. After three to four months your compost heap will become dark and crumbly, a signal that it is ready for use.



Tyranny, terrorism, anthrax, Jihad, Osama bin Laden....Until recently, these were almost abstract terms that have become all too real for us. As our pride and patriotism continue to shine on through these times of fear and despair, let us not fail to keep in our thoughts and prayers our friends and relatives in New York and Washington, our President and other leaders, the emergency and rescue workers throughout the country, and the men and women of our armed forces.

Attracting Winged Wonders to the Garden

One of the greatest rewards of gardening is attracting birds and butterflies to the garden. These diminutive creatures provide benefits beyond beauty. Both species are proven pollinators and good indicators of the environmental health of your landscape. By following the steps below, you will soon be welcoming these fanciful flyers.



Provide food and shelter: Hummingbirds and butterflies favor nectar-producing flowers. Coral honeysuckle and butterfly bush are two examples. Butterflies require host plants for egg laying. Parsley, passion flower, and tulip tree work well in most areas.

Plan for continuous bloom: Plant flowers that bloom throughout the butterfly's active season—from spring to fall. A sample landscape might include azaleas in spring, Buddleia in summer and chrysanthemums in fall. Both butterflies and hummingbirds generally prefer orange and yellow blooms.

Little Extras Attract: Placing a flat stone in a sunny location gives butterflies a resting spot to raise their temperature enough to fly. Hummingbird feeders increase the likelihood of seeing winged visitors.

Minimize pesticide use: Use biological controls or insecticidal soaps for pest management. Plant professionals can provide alternatives.

Four Season Shrubs

Bringing interest to the garden in the four seasons is often a daunting task to persons unfamiliar with the seasonality of many of the plants available in today's market. Fortunately, there are some shrubs that offer exciting characteristics in all times of the year. Each of the plants listed below possesses a showy quality in spring, summer, fall and winter.

Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*) blooms in February and is one of few if any shrubs to show flower this time of year. This plant blooms a fragrant, yellow flower ideal for cutting and bringing indoors. Witch Hazel is a multistemmed shrub reaching 6-10 feet in height. The foliage is a medium green with a medium texture throughout the season, turning to a nice golden color in fall.

Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) expands the calendar with its late summer through fall bloom. The flowers unfold into white, cone-shaped panicles that mature to a pinkish color. They then turn a paper bag brown in the winter. These flowers are great for cutting and dried arrangements. Beyond the flower, the leaf shape, color and texture are beautiful, and the exfoliating, reddish-brown bark adds warmth to our winters. The Oakleaf Hydrangea forms an open, irregular shape maturing at 6 to 8 feet tall with an equal spread. The summer foliage is a deep green with white undersides that turn rich red in autumn.

Dwarf Fothergilla (*fothergilla gardenii*) offers a beautiful midspring bloom of terminal, 2 inch, white fragrant spikes to the four season garden. The blue-green leaves are quite attractive in the summer landscape. They are alternate and simple with a wonderful texture. Autumn foliage is a stunning yellow-orange-scarlet mix that develops late in the season. This plant can reach 3 feet tall and as wide with an overall dense, rounded form.

Project Profile

West Virginia State Building 21

Fairmont, WV

The State of West Virginia General Service Administration contracted with Biafore's Landscaping to complete the installation of a retaining wall project at the entry to their Fairmont building on Adams Street. The Pisa II segmented retaining wall system was selected for the wall material. The beige colored block used complemented the existing colors of the building façade. Pisa II wall stones come out of the mold as 2 blocks connected by the face. They then must be split with a hammer and chisel. They are then stacked on a compacted limestone footing in an alternating pattern. The wall is then capped off with a preformed cap to match the stone's color. The walls at the WV State Building were built to a height to comfortably accommodate a seated adult. Interlocking concrete pavers, Roman Blend Color, were used to replace worn and damaged concrete walkways. These sections of concrete pavers provided a colorful accent to the walking surfaces. One area of concrete walk was sunken to the point of being a nuisance by collecting water after rain storms. Biafore's Landscaping removed the sunken concrete, connected a drain inlet to an existing subsurface pipe, and finished the area off with more concrete pavers.

The finishing touches came by way of landscape planting. Three Flowering Crabapple trees (*Malus sargeantii*) were installed as accents with Goldmop Cypress (*Chamecyparis pisifera* 'Goldmop') and Crimson Pygmy Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii* var. *atropurpurea* 'Nana') used to provide color in shrub mass. The remaining planting areas were rounded out with a mix of perennials and ornamental grasses such as Dwarf Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum alpecurioides* 'Hameln'), Moonbeam Coreopsis (*Coreopsis verticillata* 'Moonbeam'), Daylily Hybrids (*Hemerocalis* spp.), and Stonecrop (*Hylotelephium* x *Autumn Joy*'). This mixture of perennials and ornamental grasses provides everchanging interest throughout the better part of the year.

Fall Perennial Division

By Mitch Mason of Hauge's Garden Center

Fall is a wonderful time of year to catch up on some important maintenance in your landscape. It is not only important to spend time in the garden in the fall to promote winter survivability of perennials and shrubs, it is also the best time to divide many species of perennials.

Why would one divide perennials at all? The primary reason is to promote good plant health and encourage consistent flowering the following season. When many perennials become overcrowded, they will 'grass' (produce foliage), but will not produce flowers. The most infamous example is German or Flag Iris. The second reason is general plant health. Most plants, not just perennials, are much more susceptible to a host of bacteria and fungus. Most of us have seen Rudbeckia or Hosta 'center out', or lose its middle growth from overcrowding.

The primary reason many people are hesitant to divide perennials is that they are sure that whacking them in half with a shovel will kill them. Well, it won't. All the perennials that you will see for sale next spring are being dug and divided right now in fields from Michigan to Holland. So approach division with confidence.

What should you look for when beginning to divide? Most plants that are candidates for division have distinct growing points described as 'eyes', 'fans', or 'crowns'. Visually these parts will look like smaller versions of the adult plant and are an acceptable division. If you have questions, dig the whole plant and bring it in. Our staff at Hauge's will be happy to show you how to divide.

Some prime perennials for fall division are Yarrow (*Achillea*), Peruvian Lily (*Alstromeria*), Goats Beard (*Aruncus*), False Spirea (*Astilbe*), Bleeding Heart, (*Dicentra*), Daylily (*Hemerocalis*), Coralbell (*Heuchera*), Plantain Lily (*Hosta*), Shasta Daisy (*Lavatera*), Garden Peony (*Paeonia*), Globe Flower (*Trollius*), Oriental Poppy (*Papaver*), and Iris.

'Cultivate the garden for the nose, and the eyes will take care of themselves' –
Robert Louis Stevenson

Plant for the Season

Purple Beautyberry (*Callicarpa dichotoma*) is probably the most beautiful species of Beautyberry. This species has smaller, closer leaves than the more common American or Japanese Beautyberry. Each species though is best known for its abundance of fruit borne in late summer to early fall. These berry like fruit range in color from deep pink to deep purple. This shrub produces massive amounts of fruit that persist well after the plant has lost its leaves, providing for a striking focal point in the fall garden. Beautyberry comes in many forms, from rounded to upright to weeping, especially when heavy with fruit. Plants can be massed together to form a border or background because of their thick growth. They also may be planted singularly as a specimen with shorter forms of ornamental grasses as a background.

Beautyberry prefers full sun to partial shade with an acidic to slightly alkaline soil. This plant also adapts to dry periods with little to no water. In most instances soil amending is not necessary except in extremely poor soils. The most common cause of plant failure in this genus is planting too deep.

“It is our duty still to endeavor to avoid war; but if it shall actually take place, not matter by whom brought on, we must defend ourselves. If our house be on fire, without inquiring whether it was fired from within or without, we must try to extinguish it.”

Thomas Jefferson - 1798



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