

Smart ways to deal with all those leaves

# fine Gardening

## Plants to make your **FALL GARDEN SIZZLE**

**GIVE YOUR CONTAINERS  
a boost for the season**

**A WATER-WISE GARDEN  
THAT WOWS**

**10 plants  
FOR HOT,  
DRY PLACES**

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# Fall in love with unexpected AUTUMN COLOR

These container combinations gracefully close out the season

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**A**utumn is a glorious yet often overlooked season for container creativity. As summer annuals wane, garden centers lure us with rows and rows of ornamental cabbage and stiffly budded mums for a final burst of color before winter. So it's no surprise that our fall containers tend to look dispiritingly similar year after year.

This year, I set myself a challenge: to completely forgo those fall staples in pursuit of a wider, richer palette that would capture the unique beauty of the season. It turns out that we are spoiled for choices, even in the fall. Ornamental peppers, richly colored sedums, delicate bud-blooming heathers, and long-lasting winter pansies offer far greater interest and variety than the ubiquitous mums and cabbage. An increasing number of blooming perennials now include shorter, more compact varieties suitable for container culture. And whether or not you embrace a traditional warm fall palette, there's a pansy or viola that can enhance any color scheme and outbloom any mum it goes up against.

The inclusion of an ornamental grass brings form and movement that embodies the spirit of autumn. A tall, compact grass such as 'Morning Light' miscanthus (p. 57) makes a wonderful backbone plant and ages gracefully into the winter browns. 'Frosty Curls' New Zealand hair sedge (right, and p. 60), the palest of green fountains, is short enough to tuck into the hole left by summer annuals. 'Standing Ovation' little bluestem (p. 59) was my favorite this year. Its blue foliage with burgundy tips paired so beautifully with the new 'Touchdown Teak' sedum and Sombrero® Hot Coral coneflower that I may never give another thought to mums and cabbage.

## Deep purple and gold are a dynamic duo

'Little Goldstar' is a compact selection of the roadside favorite black-eyed Susan, and it blooms cheerfully from late summer until frost. Its star power is enhanced by dusky, purple-leaved companions and bright sprays of yew, sedge, heather, and vinca.

1. **'Bright Gold' Japanese yew**  
(*Taxus cuspidata* 'Bright Gold', Zones 4-7)
2. **'Little Goldstar' black-eyed Susan** (*Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Little Goldstar', Zones 4-8)
3. **Forever® Purple heuchera**  
(*Heuchera* 'TNHEUFP', Zones 4-9)
4. **'Black Pearl' ornamental pepper**  
(*Capsicum annuum* 'Black Pearl', annual)
5. **'Renate' heather**  
(*Calluna vulgaris* 'Renate', Zones 4-8)
6. **'Frosty Curls' New Zealand hair sedge** (*Carex albula* 'Frosty Curls', Zones 7-10)
7. **'Ascot Rainbow' spurge**  
(*Euphorbia* × *martinii* 'Ascot Rainbow', Zones 5-9)
8. **'Tiger Eye' violet**  
(*Viola* 'Tiger Eye', Zones 4-9)
9. **'Wojo's Gem' vinca**  
(*Vinca major* 'Wojo's Gem', Zones 7-9)





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## Burgundy sets a sophisticated tone

Ember-colored flowers and foliage anchor this smoldering combination. The textures of 'Morning Light' miscanthus and 'Tasmanian Tiger' euphorbia have an energizing effect, like brilliant rays of light, that keep the arrangement from feeling too monochromatic.

1. 'Morning Light' miscanthus (*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light', Zones 5–9)
2. 'Cherry Brandy' gloriosa daisy (*Rudbeckia hirta* 'Cherry Brandy', Zones 5–8)
3. 'Tasmanian Tiger' euphorbia (*Euphorbia characias* 'Tasmanian Tiger', Zones 7–10)
4. Orange Carpet® hummingbird trumpet (*Zauschneria garrettii* 'PWWG01S', Zones 5–9)
5. 'Fire Alarm' heuchera (*Heuchera* 'Fire Alarm', Zones 4–9)
6. Inspire® Scarlet winter pansy (*Viola × wittrockiana* Inspire® Scarlet, annual)
7. Irish moss (*Sagina subulata*, Zones 4–8)



### EXTEND THE SEASON

1. 'Morning Light' miscanthus ages to a handsome taupe in winter. Embrace the look by allowing it to remain in place.
2. Replace 'Cherry Brandy' gloriosa daisy with an evergreen such as fernspray hinoki cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Fillicoides', Zones 4–8).
3. Swap in hardy, evergreen Himalayan maidenhair fern (*Adiantum venustum*, Zones 5–8) for the hummingbird trumpet.





## Turn up the heat with coral and bronze

In autumn, the blue-green blades of 'Standing Ovation' little blue-stem take on sizzling, long-lasting hues of red, burgundy, and orange. This is an excellent backdrop for a coral-tinted coneflower and a subtle, bronze-purple sedum. The variegated ajuga and ornamental pepper are fresh, playful additions to this warm-colored combination.

1. 'Standing Ovation' little blue-stem (*Schizachyrium scoparium* 'Standing Ovation', Zones 3–9)
2. Sombrero® Hot Coral coneflower (*Echinacea* 'Balsomcor', Zones 4–9)
3. 'Touchdown Teak' sedum (*Sedum* 'Touchdown Teak', Zones 4–9)
4. 'Medusa' ornamental pepper (*Capsicum annuum* 'Medusa', annual)
5. Inspire® Terracotta winter pansy (*Viola* × *wittrockiana* Inspire® Terracotta, annual)
6. 'Pink Lightning' ajuga (*Ajuga reptans* 'Pink Lightning', Zones 3–9)
7. Green carpet rupturewort (*Herniaria glabra*, Zones 5–9)



### EXTEND THE SEASON

1. The coneflower, which replaced summer-blooming zinnias, can be moved to the garden when winter arrives. Replace it with a Gold Collection® Marlon hellebore (*Helleborus* × *ericsmithii* 'COSEH 980', Zones 5–8).
2. In place of the pepper, try shore juniper (*Juniperus conferta*, Zones 6–9).

## Frosty whites are refreshing

'Starshine' Japanese aster is an excellent container plant, combining the virtues of exuberant flower production with a tidy, polite growth habit. 'Silver Stone' cushion bush offers a preview of the frosty season to come, along with the white-edged euonymus and silver-veined winter creeper.

1. Variegated boxleaf euonymus (*Euonymus microphyllus* 'Variegatus', Zones 6–9)
2. 'Starshine' Japanese aster (*Aster ageratoides* 'Starshine', Zones 4–8)
3. Black mondo grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens', Zones 6–9)
4. 'Silver Stone' cushion bush (*Calocephalus brownii* 'Silver Stone', Zones 9–10)
5. 'Wolong Ghost' winter creeper (*Euonymus fortunei*\* 'Wolong Ghost', Zones 4–9)
6. Winter pansy (*Viola* × *wittrockiana* cv., annual)
7. Irish moss (*Sagina subulata*, Zones 4–8)



### EXTEND THE SEASON

1. This is truly a year-round planting; only the aster will die down for winter. When that happens, leave the roots in place and poke evergreen boughs into the soil around the crown as a placeholder. In spring just replace the pansies; the aster will return for another crescendo next fall.
2. Where the cushion bush is not hardy, try 'Silver Brocade' artemisia (*Artemisia stelleriana*\* 'Silver Brocade', Zones 4–8), or nestle in a woven twig ball for winter interest.



## Red, orange, and lime green look tasty together

'Green Spire' euonymus is a well-behaved upright shrub with glossy, evergreen foliage. It provides structure and substance that will last through the seasons, accentuating brighter companions such as vibrant 'Lime Marmalade' heuchera and tricolored peppers. The pepper shown here, 'Chilly Chili', was bred to be mild-tasting instead of intensely spicy; it's a safer choice if you think children or other curious garden visitors might try to sample the fruit.

1. **'Green Spire' euonymus** (*Euonymus japonicus* 'Green Spire', Zones 6–9)
2. **'Chilly Chili' ornamental pepper** (*Capiscum annum* 'Chilly Chili', annual)
3. **'Lime Marmalade' heuchera** (*Heuchera* 'Lime Marmalade', Zones 4–8)
4. **'Sydney' heather** (*Calluna vulgaris* 'Sydney', Zones 4–9)
5. **Black Scallop ajuga** (*Ajuga reptans* 'Binblasca', Zones 4–9)
6. **Winter pansy** (*Viola x wittrockiana* cv., annual)

