

Retail: \$4.99

Al's

2009 Late Summer - Fall Issue

bloom

Quarterly Inspiration for your Garden, Home & Lifestyle from Al's Garden Center

*Keep Your
Bloomers Up!*

TURF TIPS for FALL

Sun Loving Hydrangeas

Al's Garden Center's
crape myrtle
festival

August 14 - 23



“I DON’T WANT TO HEAR ANY EXCUSES.

KEEP YOUR BLOOMERS UP!”

by Jack Bigej, Owner of Al’s Garden Centers



Crape Myrtle 'Nana Lavener'



Echinacea Big Sky™ 'Sundown'



Hydrangea 'Endless Summer'

Why is it that when August arrives in the Northwest, and the warmer weather invites us to enjoy the outdoors, our gardens and landscapes look their bloomed out and dried up worst? June is considered to be the month that our gardens look their best, but June can be a crap shoot with the weather. So why put all your effort into a landscape that is only spectacular in one season? You have to keep your bloomers up!

Every season offers trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals that bloom their hearts out. It’s now, in the month of August, that my all time favorite tree begins to bloom - the Crape Myrtle. I’m just “Ape-over-Crape.” In the heat of summer when many Northwest trees and shrubs are looking a little tired, the Crape Myrtle’s bright blooms will knock your socks off.

I love these late bloomers for many reasons. Crape Myrtles come in multi-branching tree and shrub forms and standard single stock tree forms. These easy-to-grow trees offer four seasons of interest. Sinewy and strong, crape myrtles have

gray, tan, or cinnamon-hued branches that produce magnificent clouds of colorful, long-lasting blooms starting in late August. Their colors range from fiery reds and dazzling pinks to pale lavenders, royal purples, and cool whites. In the fall, they dependably produce radiant foliage in reds, oranges, and yellows. Winter reveals their exfoliating bark, which makes their naturally sculpted trunks look like living works of art.

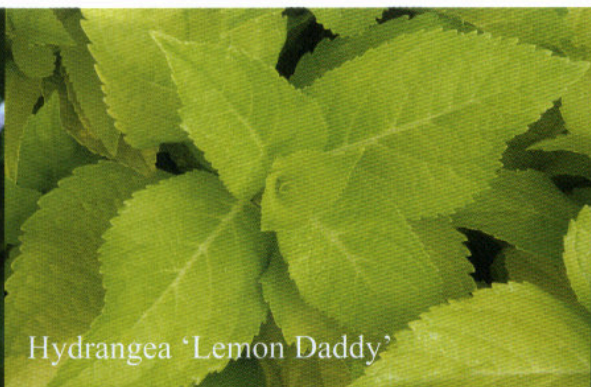
Crape Myrtles can range from 2 to 30 feet tall at maturity, depending on variety, and are easy to prune to keep to any height. Crape Myrtles grow best in full sunlight, moist fertile loam soil that has good drainage, and good air circulation. They can tolerate considerable heat, humidity, drought, or excessive moisture, but won’t be happy in the shade or in soil with poor drainage. Many people think Crape Myrtles won’t grow in our cooler climate; however, this winter proved them wrong. I would love to tell you about one or two of my favorite varieties, but I can’t. They are all worth talking about. You are just going to have to check them out yourself.

“I’M JUST APE OVER CRAPE”

“BIG DADDY WINS BIG II



Hydrangea ‘Big Daddy’



Hydrangea ‘Lemon Daddy’



Echinacea
‘Mac ‘n’ Cheese’

Echinacea ‘Merlot’

Have a little shade? You’ve got to have a hydrangea. Mop-head, lacecap, oakleaf and panicle are just a few varieties of hydrangea in a family of over 700 species. Around the 4th of July in the Northwest, this deciduous shrub produces large flowers made up of tiny blooms. Their flowers range in color from white, pink, red, purple and blue. In the case of many of the blue and pink hydrangeas you can actually change the color of their bloom by changing the pH of the soil. The more acidic the soil the bluer the hydrangea blooms, the sweeter the soil the pinker the blooms. Many hydrangeas have blooms that will change their summer color to give you a more stunning fall show. In the past, hydrangeas have preferred the shade, but in the last few years breeders have created hydrangeas that perform even when planted in the full sun. Two recently released shade-loving hydrangeas, ‘Big Daddy’ and ‘Lemon Daddy’, have caught my eye.

‘Big Daddy’ is appropriately named because it grows an absolutely enormous flower head. It wins major Big Bloomer points in my book. Its cousin ‘Lemon Daddy’ stands out in the

dark shade with brilliant yellow foliage; bring your sunglasses along to enjoy this hydrangea.

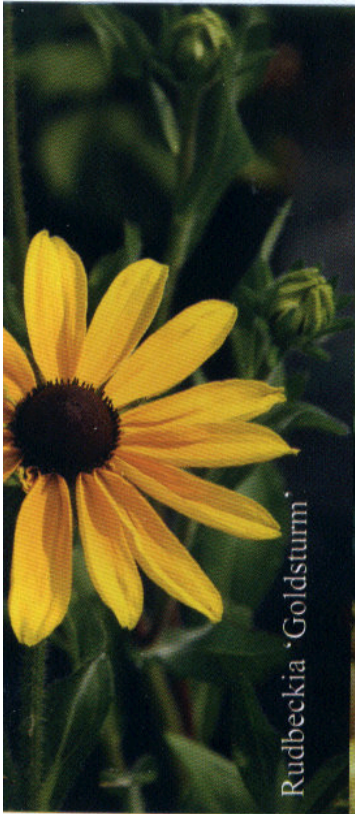
I have some great suggestions to keep your perennial beds blooming all summer. Two sun-loving, perfect planting partners to accent my favorite Crape Myrtles are Echinaceas and Rudbeckias. Recently, local breeders like Terra Nova Nursery and Skagit Nursery have been busy releasing many fantastic Echinaceas, a.k.a Coneflowers. It’s amazing how much horticultural talent is in our neck of the woods. Two fun Echinaceas are ‘Merlot’ and ‘Mac & Cheese’. They have flavorful names and are colorful knockouts in your garden. Then there is ‘Sun-down’ an Echinacea in the Big Sky™ series that reminds me of my favorite Hawaiian sunset.

If you like your garden to glow, Rudbeckias, commonly known as Black Eyed Susans will take care of you. The tried and true ‘Goldsturm’ is a consistent performer in any garden. “Sturm” means storm in German. It is as strong and enduring as our last winter storm, plus it’s a great perennial if you are just getting

“IT REMINDS ME OF MY

THE BLOOMERS.”

FAVORITE HAWAIIAN SUNSET.”



Rudbeckia 'Goldsturm'



Rudbeckia 'Toto'



Garden Mum



Crape Myrtle 'Zuni'

started growing plants to use as cut flowers. 'Toto' is a variety of Rudbeckia that is packed with character. Just like Dorothy's four legged pal in the Wizard of Oz, 'Toto' is small but spirited. 'Toto' is considered a short-lived perennial, since it may not be up to the challenge in a tough Oregon winter.

Those annuals you planted in May might be getting a little leggy right about now. Garden Mums look great and can take the place of those long in the tooth annuals while keeping your color big and bold. Garden Mums come in a bunch of colors and can carry your beds with summer color until you plant your fall and winter Pansies.

Now with all these options for late blooming summer color, I don't want to hear any excuses. For goodness sakes, keep your bloomers up! ✨

UPCOMING SEMINAR

Crape Myrtle Festival: Crape Myrtle Basics

Join Jack Bigej, the owner of Al's, as he shares the basics about one of his favorite plants, Crape Myrtle. Nothing beats the late summer bloom of the Crape Myrtle. Attend this class and learn how to grow and care for these beauties in your yard.

Woodburn: Saturday, August 15th at 10:00am
Sherwood: Saturday, August 22nd at 10:00am

Check out our complete list of seminars & events on pages 18 and 19.

