

Extending the Season of Bloom

As cooler temperatures herald the beginning of fall, many summer blooming perennials begin to die back. Gardeners can continue to enjoy color in their gardens by planting perennials and shrubs that bloom through the fall and even during the winter.

Asters are popular plants for late summer and fall color. Plants range in size from 18-60" and prefer full sun with well-drained soil. Some of the taller varieties may require staking. The small daisy-like flowers have yellow centers and can have white, blue, pink, rose, or violet petals. Asters attract bees and butterflies and are deer resistant. Most asters are excellent as cut flowers. Divide plants every two to three years in the spring.

- *Aster novae-angliae* 'Purple Dome' is a dwarf variety with vibrant purple flowers.
- *Aster oblongifolius* 'Raydon's Favorite' has a compact, mounding habit with aromatic foliage and bright, blue-purple flowers.
- *Aster laevis* 'Bluebird' is a tall, vase-shaped, native wildflower and has large, 1" diameter blue flowers.

Boltonia asteroides or false aster is a native plant that blooms from late summer to fall. *Boltonia* grows in partial to full sun and ranges in height from 36-60" at maturity. Like asters, *Boltonia* species are deer resistant and attractive to pollinators. *Boltonia* has bluish-green to gray-green foliage and white, pink, or purple blooms with yellow centers. 'Snowbank' is a cultivar with white flowers that grows to 4'.

Hamamelis species, commonly known as witch hazel, are shrubs or small trees that prefer rich, well-drained soil and provide year-round interest in the garden or landscape. All *Hamamelis* species have brilliant fall foliage.

- *Hamamelis virginiana*, common witch hazel, has fragrant yellow flowers with narrow petals and blooms in the fall.
- *Hamamelis vernalis* or vernal witch hazel, blooms in late winter in Ocean County. The flowers are fragrant and reddish in color.

Checklist for September

Flower and Vegetable Garden

- ✓ Dig up and cure tender summer bulbs when foliage turns brown. Store in a cool, dry place. Please see University of Maine Bulletin # 2750 "**An Introduction to Seed Saving for the Home Gardener**". <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2750e/>
- ✓ Plant winter pansies and fall annuals, i.e., ornamental cabbage and kale.
- ✓ Plant peonies in well-drained, slightly acidic soil.

Indoor Plants

- ✓ Ensure houseplants are pest-free before taking them indoors.
- ✓ Check to see if your houseplants are root bound. If so, remove carefully and repot.

Lawn

- ✓ Continue to mow and fertilize lawn, as needed. This is the best time to fertilize and seed your lawn. Please see Virginia Cooperative Extension Publication No. 430-520 "**Fall Lawn Care**". https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/430/430-520/430-520_pdf.pdf
- ✓ Continue to dethatch and aerate. Check Ocean County Hazardous Waste Day schedule at 1-800-55RECYCLE or (732) 506-5047 or www.co.ocean.nj.us/SolidWaste to dispose of pesticides and other waste.