**Alternatives to Mums**

Fall blooming mums line the shelves of local garden centers and big box stores waiting to be purchased and planted in yards throughout our neighborhoods. Available in typical fall hues of yellow, rust, and red, they blend in well with the changing colors of tree and shrub foliage. While purple flowering asters have become a popular option to add color to the autumn landscape, there are other fall blooming perennials with that same potential.

\*With blooms that resemble a turtle’s head, *Chelone* spp., common name turtlehead, grows well in sun and shade to a height between 2 and 4 feet. Native to wetlands, it is useful in rain gardens and in other wet sites. It spreads slowly by rhizomes but is not invasive. Attractive to butterflies, *Chelone* blooms from late summer through fall.

\*Joe-Pye Weed, *Eupatorium* spp., begins blooming mid-season but flowers continually through early fall. The pink flowers turn to brown by early winter but can remain standing for winter interest. This plant can dominate a garden with its 5-6’ height; yet, shorter cultivars suitable for smaller gardens have been developed. Joe-Pye Weed is attractive to butterflies and other pollinators.

\**Rudbeckia* spp*.,* commonly known as Black-eyed Susan, begin blooming mid-season but continue flowering through early to mid-fall. The daisy-like blossoms are yellow, gold, or even bi-colored. Some types grow to only one foot in height while others can reach 3-4 feet. Sunny sites are the best for *Rudbeckia*. Unfortunately, several varieties are susceptible to Septoria leaf spot, causing brown to black spots on the foliage and stems. Allow for ample air circulation around plants to assist with decreasing the incidence of this fungal disease.

\* *Tricyrtis* spp.,common name Toad Lily, is a shade-loving perennial with a unique orchid-like bloom. The speckled blossoms are white, pink, or purple, depending on the cultivar. The arching stems hold green or variegated leaves with the variegation being much showier if grown in shade. Toad Lilies grow to a height of 2 to 3 feet.

\**Sedum* spp.have the common name stonecrop and are drought tolerant ranging in height from a few inches to two feet. These sun-lovers offer a wide range of foliage color from green to blue-grey to burgundy. Flowers come in a variety of pink shades as well as white and muted red. While some types have a sprawling growth habit, others are upright. Their succulent-like leaves play a part in their water holding capacity. Some types may bloom in summer, yet many flower later in the season with the color intensifying with the arrival of fall.

\*Fall blooming *Anemone* continue to gain interest. Ranging in height from under one foot to 4 feet, they grow best in well-drained soils in sun or partial shade. Available in hues of pink or white, the delicate petals are arranged in single or double rows. The flowers are held atop mounds of green to dark green foliage.

Add a few of these perennials to add interest to your landscape throughout the fall season.

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