**Brooklin Horticultural Society Presentation for September 26, 2012 meeting**

Sofie’s Picks - A listing of plants presented at the Brooklin Horticultural Society meeting September 26, 2012, a combination of new and newer introductions and other interesting plants and/or tips and advice given by an amateur, but plant addicted gardener. I am very passionate about gardening and can talk your ear off if you will listen to me. You may notice that the presentations seem to getting longer, and longer each month.

Sofie Bigham e-mail – [bigham@sympatico.ca](mailto:bigham@sympatico.ca) , 10 acre property with a huge display of perennials, trees, shrubs, and large collections which include roses, clematis, hostas, daylilies & more. This is a private garden, not a nursery. Free open gardens are scheduled 3-4 times a year for the public.

[www.masonhousegardens.com](http://www.masonhousegardens.com) 3520 Durham Road #1(Brock Rd), RR 4 PO Box 886Uxbridge,ON L9P 1R4  
Phone (905)649-3532 – New introductions, unusual plants, perennials, grasses, vines, shrubs, tropicals, vegetables + a huge selection of heritage tomatoes. All varieties and prices listed on their website

[www.gardenimport.com](http://www.gardenimport.com) Mail Order Company, Thornhill, Ontario Phone 1-800-339-8314 Prices & varieties listed on website

[www.kingswaygreenhouse.com](http://www.kingswaygreenhouse.com) Oshawa, Ontario 905-434-3851 – Plants are not listed on their website

[www.vandermeernursery.com](http://www.vandermeernursery.com) 905-427-2525 588 Lakeridge Rd. S., Ajax, ON (corner of Lakeridge and Bayley). Plants not listed.

[www.goldenbrookhostas.com](http://www.goldenbrookhostas.com) Blackstock, Ontario, Mail order (Canada only) + pick up. Huge selection of hostas with photos, including newest varieties and prices

<http://www.lamrockscountrygarden.com> – hostas, roses, some perennials. Varieties & prices listed on website

**John’s Perennials**, 905-862-8175, Uxbridge, ON Perennials, annuals, roses, shrubs, trees, rare conifers + more

**Peter Keeping**, Bowmanville, Ontario – sells unusual & hard to find clematis as well as perennials at very reasonable prices– Peter imports clematis from Europe/England 905-697-7842

[www.richtersherbs.com](http://www.richtersherbs.com) Goodwood, Ontario, They also have many free seminars on Sundays, check events on website

Sheridan

**Country Market Garden Centre**, 2535 Taunton Rd. E., Bowmanville, L1C 3K2, 905-263-2090 – has a good selection of perennials, roses, trees, shrubs, conifers, annuals and tropical plants at very reasonable prices. Also local produce, baked items and giftware. He always has something unique every year.

Hi everyone, Holy cow, where did the summer go? It seems to go faster every year! This evening, I would like to focus on fall – fall planting, fall plants, fall tips, fabulous fall sales! Right now, I know that Mason House has their entire inventory (except newest perennials) on sale at 50% off until Sept. 30th, Vandermeer has 40% off until Sept 26th, then likely further discounts after that date, Sheridan has 30% off their perennials plus other various discounts. **Vandermeer’s roses are now reduced to $5.00 each with an excellent selection as of this date.**

**A SURE SIGN OF AUTUMN – THE ISABELLA TIGER MOTH**

*This excerpt was taken from an old issue of Harrowsmith Country Life magazine*

As sure as the leaves turn red and the robins fly south, there's another harbinger of the season, just as familiar although largely unsung. It is the presence of the woolly bear, a fuzzy black-and-bronze caterpillar often seen wandering across the lawn (and the road) at this time of year. Unlike most moth species, it overwinters in its larval state. Amazingly, it endures freezing temperatures by producing an internal anti-freeze called glycerol, which protects vital organs from severe cold. Likewise, it produces sugars that keep its blood and cells from freezing. Come spring, the woolly bear rouses itself and eventually pupates; in summer it emerges as the attractive Isabella tiger moth – a large moth with a 2 inch wing span.

**A SURE SIGN OF AUTUMN – APPLES**

Remember that great apple store on Thickson Rd. called Algoma Orchards. Unfortunately for us they have now moved to Newcastle. Here is some interesting information taken for our local paper called This Week, September 19th, 2012 about this apple farm. Algoma Orchards grow apples on 600 acres. Many farmers lost their apple crops this year due to the weather. Algoma was able to save 75 to 80% of their crop by running frost fans for most of April, had helicopters make slow runs back and forth above the trees on colder nights and burned bales of hay throughout the orchards. Did you know that they ship one million boxes of fresh apples and 7 million litres of fresh apple juice across Canada each year? Amazing!

**Fall sales for plants**: this absolutely is a great time to plant, the soil is warm, we are getting lots of rain and there are fantastic sales on plants and garden tools. If you are tired of the garden and have lost interest for the year, if you are planning or renovating a new bed next spring, then now is the time to buy your plants at greatly reduced prices. I used to spend a lot of time burying plants, pot and all, for the winter or I would group them outside with a mulch of leaves which always blew away. It was a lot of work as I also had two rose trees which I used to bury if you can imagine! I was visiting Sheridan Nurseries one day in Whitby in very late fall and noticed the staff had rounded up all the unsold plants in a corner of their unheated greenhouse. The plants were well watered before freeze-up and yes, they spent the winter there, ready for sale again in the spring. Now, if I purchase plants in pots (may include trees, shrubs, perennials, lavender, conifers, roses, rose trees) and if I don’t get around to planting them before freeze-up, I store them in my unheated garage on a table, on a rack or on the floor. Leave the potted plants outside as long as possible – into November, and make sure they are watered well before placing in the garage – they can take a few hits of frost. They will freeze solid over the winter. In early spring, you will notice them showing green, start watering again and either leave in the garage a while longer or gradually acclimatize before placing them outside again. If you don’t have a garage to overwinter, you can bury the plants in their pots somewhere in your garden for the winter. Do not overwinter summer bulbs like cannas, dahlias, callas, gladiola’s in the garage - they will turn to mush.

**Fall sales for tools:** one of the best investments I have ever made was to purchase a battery powered hedge trimmer. No messy, stinky gas, no awkward cords to get in the way. Avoid blistered hands, fatigued wrists, and a sore back. A breeze to use, this power tool slices through last year’s debris (or this year’s if you clean-up in the fall) in minutes, not hours. Grasses, lavender, and most perennials are easily pruned. I even use it to rough prune my 400+ roses. (Some grasses, such as a mature miscanthus clump, will likely need a chain saw or hand pruning as the stems can become very thick.) One caveat, make sure there are no wire supports or cords hidden amongst the dead stems. You will get about one hour out of one charge – just about the right time to spend on this activity. These trimmers are currently on sale at Wal-Mart for $55.00, reg. $80.00.

Winged weeder – I mentioned this wonderful time-saving weeder earlier in the year and have since found it for sale at Lee Valley Tools. There is a store located in Scarborough. This is not on sale but is only about $13.00. If you can still bend over, get the short handled one with a 4 ½ inch blade (I do not like the larger blade) – for lefties and right handed people. There is also a long handled version. Check out the website for both the winged weeder and Lee Valley’s on-line store.

**Bottom Trays for overwintering pots of plants**: If you have to bring in plants from outside, I have found the perfect bottom containers for your pots. There is a wholesale Superstore located at Glenhill and Highway 2 in Whitby just west of Thickson Rd. where you can buy all sorts of plastic serving containers, paper cups and lids, etc. The top covers of serving containers come in various sizes, are not expensive and are excellent to use as bottom trays. If you have huge pots to bring in for the winter, consider using a boot tray or place several smaller pots on the boot tray

**ROSES FOR YOU**

**Knockout rose:** If you like shrubs, I would highly recommend a rose called Knockout as it behaves like a shrub – 3-4 feet tall and wide, it has lush, disease resistant foliage, burgundy coloured new growth and retains its leaves unlike many roses in late summer, early fall. It blooms continually from June until frost. How many shrubs will do that? I have the original knockout rose (it is called “Knockout”) that produces a very bright cherry red single flower, but there are many new cultivars in softer colours and in double forms, including a new yellow one introduced in 2009 called Sunny Knockout that is very fragrant as well. Sunny Knockout is yellow in bud and quickly fades to creamy white, giving the bush a multi-coloured effect. Prune your knock-out roses in early spring after the last frost to control the size. I did not prune my four knockouts this year because of the early spring.

**Climbing Rose “Jeanne LeJoie”** – a miniature pink climbing rose. I saw this rose at Cecil Lamrock’s home in Scarborough many years ago planted on a south facing garage wall. It was covered in hundreds of pink blooms – quite a sight. It is available from Cecil Lamrock in Port Perry – see above for his website & phone number. Another good mini-climber from Cecil is Warm Wishes – about 4-6 feet tall with beautiful orange single blooms.

Reminder again - All roses are now on sale for $5.00 at Vandermeer’s.

***NEW AND/OR INTERESTING PLANTS for fall.***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tree Heptacodium Micanoides | Common name is Seven Sun Flower. It is a plant suitable for a smaller lot as it can be grown as a shrub or trained as a tree. Its peeling, shredding bark is the colour of coffee with cream. It is most unusual in that it flowers for about 3-4 weeks in late summer/early fall. The entire tree is covered in frothy, white blooms resembling a bubble bath. That’s not all – when the flowers fade, the calyx’s turn red giving the appearance of another bloom. I gave a tree form of Seven Son Flower to my son for his front lawn. He loves it when someone asks “what is that tree” and he loves to impress them with the Latin name “Heptacodium Micanoides”! | Mason House  Vandermeer |
| Tree  Salix Babylonica “crispa” | Common name is Ringleaf Willow. I have never seen or heard of this tree in all my years of gardening. It is most unusual in that the silvery leaves curl around forming a ring, hence the name ringleaf willow (it reminds me of a snail). This willow grows more upright than the weeping willow to about 40 feet at maturity. This tree likes full sun with moist soil, although I have found that willows will grow just about anywhere. . Willows are not suitable for small lots in my opinion. Do not plant willows near septic systems or house foundations. (My 4 foot tree was only $20.00 at Country Market)! | Country Market Garden Centre, see above |
| Thuja Whipcord Cedar whipcord | A mature Whipcord is sight to behold. Rarely available at nurseries, Whipcord' is an unusual selection of the Western Red Cedar but Whipcord’ only grows to about 4-5 feet tall and wide in 10-15 years. Some people say it looks like spaghetti, an upside down rope mop, “It” from the TV show “The Munsters”, the tail end of exploding fireworks as the sparks cascade downward in the sky. The foliage resembles cords – having no lateral branching. Whipcord will do best in full sun (where it is full and lush) to partial shade conditions (where the habit is more open and stringy). It’s very cold hardy It stays neat at a growth rate of only 3 - 6" per year. Check this website for a picture: <http://www.pudelko.com.pl/katalog_roslin/577/thuja_plicata_zywotnik_whipcord> | Country Market Garden Centre, see above |
| Shrub  Lezpedeza “Gibralter” | With arching, fountainlike growth, this variety has hundreds of deep rose pea-like flowers and is spectacular in the fall. It behaves like an herbaceous perennial in that it dies to the ground over the winter and produces new growth from the base late in the spring – similar to butterfly bush (you might think it is dead). It will grow about 4ft. tall and 6-8 feet wide by late summer so give it lots of room. This shrub is ideal if you have a raised bed where it can cascade over the edge. It will grow in poor soil in full sun and average moisture. It always sells out at John’s perennials whenever people see this shrub in his garden in full bloom. Although not the same cultivar, Gibralter looks exactly as the photo at this site. It will give you an idea what a mature plant looks like. <http://wholelifegardening.com/blog/2012/09/12/got-space/> | -John’s perennials  -Garden Import  -Mason House ?? |
| Shrub  Weigela florida “wings of fire”  Weigala florida “Ghost” | More compact than other Weigela florida, “wings of fire” grows 3-5 feet tall. It flowers in June with flowers ranging from light to dark pink. It features red coloured stems and larger, broader leaves and what makes it different than other weigelas is that the leaves turn brilliant red as the fall progresses. <http://springhillnursery.com/wings-of-fire-weigela/p/83817/> I just bought this so will comment further next year.  The leaves of “ghost” sprout yellow/green in spring and transform to ghostly buttery cream with a hint of green as the season progresses. The main bloom is ruby red in June with occasional blooms all summer. Sometimes hard to find, I saw several on sale for 30% off (regular price $24.99) at Sheridan Nurseries in Whitby). This is my favourite weigela. The colour of the leaves is so unique right now.  <http://www.gardensmart.tv/?p=plant_of_the_week&plant_name=Weigela_Ghost> | Vandermeer  Sheridan |
| Shrub Viburnum Nudum “Brandywine” | This is a difficult shrub to find but I did find it a couple of years ago at Pineridge Garden Gallery in Pickering. Ask Rick to see if he can get it for you. (I got mine by mail order from Nettlecreek Nurseries in Fonthill, Ontario.) The berries on this shrub start green, then coral/pink, then indigo/navy blue, the pinks and blues appearing at the same time. It has beautiful shiny foliage which changes to dark maroon red in the fall. Most nudum varieties require a pollinator to get berries. Brandywine does not. My plant is only 2 feet tall but it already has 5 or 6 clusters of berries and I can only imagine what it will look like when it becomes mature – it will be a spectacular sight. Check it out here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHX000DRPUc> | Pineridge Garden Gallery |
| Shrub  Hibiscus Syriacus  “ blue chiffon”, “lavender chiffon”, “white chiffon”,  “Diana”  “Blue Satin” | Common Name Rose of Sharon. Rose of Sharon can be grown as a shrub or trimmed to one stem to grow as a standard. I am training all my Rose of Sharon’s to a standard form. The problem with Rose of Sharon is its tendency to set thousands of seeds that germinate throughout my garden. The chiffon series of Rose of Sharon sport large semi-double flowers with lacy centres that do not set viable seed. (I have noticed seed pods on my plants so will let you know next year if they are viable.) The plants in my garden are still blooming as of September 26th and will continue to bloom as I can see lots of additional buds. The single flowered shrubs have finished blooming at least two weeks ago. Rose of Sharon can reach 8 to 12 feet tall and 4 to 6 feet wide but can be kept in check by pruning in spring – they bloom on new wood. The double flowered Rose of Sharon’s do not set seeds. They look like the Kleenex poufs we used to use tape wedding cars (I guess I am dating myself!).  Diana is another cultivar with single, pure white flowers which is also a sterile variety.  Blue Satin has beautiful, large, showy, single blue flowers with a hint of lavender but will set seed. It is a much superior variety to an older cultivar called “Blue Bird. <http://www.colorchoiceplants.com/satins.htm#ixzz26bKQOW7c> | Most nurseries |
| Vines Perennial  Polygonum “Aubertii” | Common Name Silver Lace Vine. Lacy, foamy cream flowers, shimmery white sprays in great profusion, clouds of white bloom in late summer/early fall – all these describe the look of Silver Lace vine. At a growth rate of 20-30 feet in one season, it will provide a fast, dense cover for chain link fences, arbours, porches. It needs good, strong support. Tolerant of dry, sandy soil. Cut it to the ground every few years.  Tip: Plant **one** morning glory vine to weave through the silver lace for a fabulous effect – both blooming later in the season. I think any other vine (like clematis) will be overwhelmed by silver lace if planted together. | Most nurseries |
| Vines Perennial  Clematis “ternifolia” | Sweet Autumn clematis can be listed as Clematis paniculata or C. “ternifolia” or C. maximonowicziana or C. dioscoreifolia. It blooms in late summer, early fall. It is a gorgeous sight when covered in small, pure white, lightly fragrant flowers, followed by a silvery mass of fluffy seed heads. It blooms on new wood so cut the stems back to 12inches in spring or cut wayward stems back as hard as necessary two or three times during the summer to keep it in check. It will thrive and bloom well in partial shade. You may have to wait one year for it to start blooming. It can reach 30 feet in one season so it needs something to “travel” on that will accommodate its rampant growth, like chain link fences, old tree stumps covered in chicken wire, lattice or arbours to drape over. It will be too large for a trellis in my opinion. |  |
| Vines  Annuals  Mina Lobata | Common Name Spanish Flag. Another rampant annual vine growing 10 – 20 feet in one season, and should be grown on structures as described with Sweet Autumn clematis. This vine is glorious mid-summer to fall, just loaded with delicate sprays that start reddish-orange and then fade from orange, to yellow, to white. Plan ahead for next year – you will have to purchase plants or start seeds for next spring. | Mason House for plants |
| Grass  Hakonecloa macra “Naomi”  “All gold” | Beautiful yellow-and-green variegated cultivar that turns cool shades of purple and red in autumn. This dwarf is ideal for edging, containers, and mass plantings in part shade! Striking cascading down a slope or draping over rocks. 12" tall, 18" wide. Naomi is a little bit different nearly every time you look at it . Have fun experimenting with the placement of this grass.  For all you neatniks, this grass is a tidy, cascading, golden grass that stays gold all season. I grow mine in dappled shade and absolutely love this cultivar. <http://www.perennialresource.com/plants/ornamental-grasses-sedges-rushes/1758_hakonechloa-macra-all-gold.aspx>  **There are several cultivars of Hakonecloa grasses – beni-kazi, aureola, Nicolas, albostriata. All of these grasses change colour as fall approaches. 'Nicolas' is similar to 'Beni-kaze with its red tones and fountain like habit. It is much smaller than 'Beni-kaze,' and has more orange in its fall coloration. The two make an excellent pair! Experiment with the placement of these grasses in various degrees of shade. Buy them all, especially now that they are all on sale!! They are fabulous.** | Most nurseries |
| Grass Pennisetum alopecuroides “Red Head” | A beautiful arching, clumping, green grass, about 2 ½ feet tall, it sends out burgundy, bottle brush blooms about mid-late July . Pair this grass with a shrub rose called Knock-out. The new growth on “knock-out” is burgundy, complementing the burgundy bottle-brush blooms beautifully. See the section titled “A Rose for You” for more information on Knock-Out roses. | Mason House, Sheridan |
| Grass  Panicum Virgatum “Shenandoah” | One of the most admired grasses in my garden during open gardens. The blades start green and by mid-summer take on shades of burgundy. The wonderful, misty plumes start burgundy and turn a tan colour as fall approaches. The plumes look like a mist of “bugs” hovering over the foliage. Grows about 4’ tall and spreads very slowly. One of the panicum’s that can be moved if necessary, one bit at a time. | Most nurseries |
| Perennial Rudbeckia triloba  “prarie glow” | It is a mystery to me why more nurseries do not sell Rudbeckia triloba. This is a 3-4 ft. tall plant with sprays of miniature black eyed susans. “Prairie glow” has the same growth habit as “triloba” but the flowers are golden on the outside and ringed in the centre in brick red. Starts to bloom in late July, continues to late fall. | Vandermeer |
| Shrub ilex verticillata berry | If you want those beautiful red berries, grow our native holly instead of the finicky holly most of us are familiar with. You will need a male and female plant. They do well in moist, even wet soils. It is Sept. 26th and my shrubs are fully loaded with red berries which I will use for Christmas decorating. | Most nurseries |
| Kimberley Fern | I have 3 very large Kimberley ferns on pots that I put on boot trays to overwinter – some in south facing window and some facing east – I don’t think it matters. Kimberley fern is a wonderful fern, similar to Boston fern but more upright. **The thing with Kimberley fern is that she will grow in full sun**. Get yours now while they are half price at many places – they are easy to overwinter indoors. Grow it in pots or in the ground. I will grow one plant in the ground next year. They grow very fast and you should transplant to larger pots as soon as you get them. | Most nurseries |

**Rose tips**: fall is an ideal time to plant roses. Brooklin is in zone 5b. I have over 450 roses, none of which are pampered or hilled for the winter. The secret in cold climates is to plant the rose so that the bud union is 4-6 inches below ground level (the bud union is the swollen part at the base of the plant where the rose is grafted to a hardy root stock). I have purchased roses in late fall in pots and stored them in an unheated garage for the winter. Rose trees have also survived in the garage with flying colours. So much easier than burying them in the ground.

* I have moved many roses in the fall when they are dormant – end of October, mid-November before freeze-up. This gives them a head start in the spring. I have moved many roses in late fall before the ground freezes.
* Don’t prune roses in fall (unless the canes are whipped by the wind or are in the way
* Climbers – do not prune in the fall or spring except to remove dead canes.
* Once bloomers, never cut back more than ½,
* Don’t fertilize roses after August 1st in our climate.
* Another tip: In the spring, the dead branches are mowed down indiscriminately with my battery-powered hedge trimmer. This method has not affected the plants adversely. A little more fine-tuning can be done later.

**TIMELY TIPS FOR SEPTEMBER**

**ALL ABOUT TOMATOES**

***Saving Tomato seeds*** – non-hybrid seeds (this method taken from an old book called “52 Week-end Garden Projects”)

Tomato Seed Brew: Fermenting your tomatoes for a few days kills the organisms that cause bacterial canker, a seed-borne disease. Squash the tomato seeds and juice in a glass. Add ¼ cup of water and set the brew where you will see and remember to check on it. Stir the tomato/water mixture once a day for three to four days. It will begin to bubble on the second or third day, depending on the room temperature. On the fourth or fifth day, spoon or pour off the pulp and the lifeless floating seeds that have risen to the top. Strain, rinse, and air-dry the heavier, viable seeds that have settled to the bottom. *This method is great if you want to go to all that bother, but I just put the seeds on a plate and leave them there ‘til they dry out completely and scrape them off the plate and put them in a plastic baggie.*

**Freezing tomatoes: Use this recipe calling for canned tomatoes – the flavour is far superior to purchased canned tomatoes. I got this method for freezing from The Star newspaper several years ago. I freeze mine in zip-lock freezer bags.**

-Unblemished ripe tomatoes

-Boiling water

-Granulated sugar

-Salt

-Zip-lock freezer bags or containers

Peel tomatoes by dipping them in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds. Dip in cool water to stop cooking process. Gently slip off the skins. Remove core and roughly chop. Add 1 tsp. sugar and 1 tsp. salt to 4 cups of chopped tomatoes in a saucepan. Cook gently until tender, about 3-4 minutes. Put the freezer bag in an upright plastic contained – pour in cooked tomatoes. Use good quality freezer ziplock bags – no need to cool tomatoes after boiling. If using freezer bags, make sure they are well zipped and freeze flat – you can stack them over each other – takes less room in the freezer. Label and store for up to one year.

**Green Tomatoes**: Too many *green tomatoes*? Get a cardboard box, line it with newspaper, place tomatoes in one layer, add another layer of newspaper (a whole section) and add another layer of tomatoes. Place one more section of paper on top of the tomatoes and close the lid. Check every day for ripe tomatoes or for any that have gone bad. I have tomatoes ripening gradually until November that actually taste good.

**TOMATO PEPPER SALSA**

My mother used to make this recipe late summer, early fall with the abundance of peppers and tomatoes from her garden. Use equal amounts of peppers and tomatoes e.g. 4 cups of peppers to 4 cups tomatoes. This is a very forgiving recipe and quantities of tomatoes and peppers can vary, more or less. Freeze it in zip-lock freezer bags to enjoy over the winter. Serve it with fresh or toasted crusty bread – so delicious!

* Peppers – any amount – I generally use about 3-4 cups of chopped peppers, seeds removed as much as possible
* Tomatoes with their juice– chopped roughly – the same amount as the peppers. Try to remove the skins as much as possible but not necessary.
* Balsamic Vinegar or Red Wine Vinegar (optional) – 1-2 tablespoons
* Garlic – 3-4 cloves, finely chopped
* Oil – any kind, olive, vegetable, canola – 2 or more tablespoons
* Sea Salt – ½ to 1 teaspoon or more depending on the quantity of peppers and tomatoes. Add the salt a bit at a time and taste as you go along. Do not skip the salt and add enough to make it taste good or else you will have a very bland salsa that tastes like cardboard.

Fry the peppers in the oil in a large skillet at medium high for about 5 minutes. Lower the temperature to medium low and continue to sauté for about another 15 minutes. Add the tomatoes, garlic, balsamic vinegar and salt and continue to sauté at medium low or lower for another 15-20 minutes. To freeze, transfer to good quality zip-lock bags, squish flat, label with contents and date and freeze flat. Once frozen, the packages can be stacked on top of each other.

**Drying Basil** - I have found that a convection oven is an easy way to dry herbs. (I don’t think this will work with the countertop convection ovens). I wash and dry the basil (a salad spinner dries it very well), place individual leaves on a non-stick rimmed cookie sheet, and place in the oven. Experiment with your oven for temperature and time, as the leaves turn crispy fast. I store the dried leaves (uncrushed) in plastic zip-lock bags in a cool place and crush them when I use them in a recipe.

**Freezing Basil** – I have discovered a great way to freeze basil and the basil actually stays green and full of fresh basil flavour. Wash and dry your basil leaves (on tea towels or paper towels or spinner). Place a piece of wax paper on a rimmed baking sheet. Spread the basil leaves evenly on top and pop in the freezer overnight. Remove the frozen leaves quickly (they thaw fast) to a plastic zip lock bag and place back in the freezer. Surprisingly, the basil leaves retained their green colour and the taste is just like fresh basil.

**Parsley and Sage -** freezing retains the freshest flavour**.** Wash, dry and freeze in freezer bags. To dry sage, see procedure in the basil notes.

**Rosemary and Thyme** - wash whole stems with leaves attached and place on a towel to dry. Freeze whole stems

without removing the leaves. The tiny leaves are easier to remove from the stems after they have been frozen.

***Saving Seeds:***

[***http://www.seedsavers.org/instructions.htm***](http://www.seedsavers.org/instructions.htm) ***this is an excellent site for instructions on saving and germinating seeds (find instructions on this site in the resources heading – drop down menu -seed saving resources).***

***Biennals do not produce seeds until their second year of growth. Beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, kale, leeks, onions, swiss chard, turnip are all biennial and will likely not survive our winters to produce seeds (I have had leeks and onions survive our winters). If you are interested in saving seeds for biennials, the above site will give instructions for colder climates. I just prefer to buy the seeds.***

***Air-dry your seeds – (even those that seem dry when you pluck them from the plant) on trays or layers of newspapers for a week or two in a shaded, well-ventilated place. I dry my seeds on my kitchen windowsill. Various species of plants differ in the longevity of their seeds. Parsnip and onion seeds are notoriously short-lived. Pumpkin seed and tomato seeds are viable for many years.***

**Tulips and crocus – the favourite food of squirrels and chipmunks**

I have stopped growing tulips because the entire lot I have planted have been eaten. However, I do love tulips. I am going to try a couple of batches again this year but will keep these two things in mind. 1. Hen manure to repel squirrels - $6.95 at Garden Import, also at Vandermeer’s – sprinkle over the ground after planting the tulips or crocus in fall & again in spring. 2. Plant tulips really deep – 10-12 inches, the critters don’t like to dig that far down.

Here is tip if you want pots of blooming bulbs in the spring. Plant your bulbs in pots, closely together, then bury the whole lot in the vegetable garden. If you use a hanging basket, the hanger portion will stick out of the ground and will be easy to find and dig out in spring when you see the plants starting to sprout.

**Coleus and brugmansia in water for the winter**

I kept coleus going in water in vases on my east facing kitchen window for the entire winter and took cuttings from the stems in spring. A visitor to my garden gave me a tip on keeping brugmansia over the winter. She takes several cuttings and just keeps them going all winter in a pail. Make sure there is always water in the pail, not like I did last year and let it dry out. I am going to try this with the brugmansias again as the two I have are now massive plants as they are growing in the ground. I am still going to chop the brugmansias in the garden to one foot high, root prune and stuff them in a pot and see what happens. Bananas can be chopped to one foot high and put in a pot in the basement. Water lightly over the winter.

Here is a list of annuals blooming in my garden September 26th, 2012, zone 5b.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| a | Ageratum | Blue Horizon is a superior variety that is taller – 18” and blooms ‘til frost. Will self-seed. Lilac/blue | 18 inches |
| A | Allysum | The purple one is outstanding right now. |  |
|  | Bidens Pirates Pearl | This is a white version of the popular yellow bidens which takes over a pot. I grow mine in the ground and they bloom all summer – a wonderful plant – needs lots of room |  |
| a | Begonias | Dragon Wing – and excellent variety for full sun or shade in red or pink, wax begonias- a neat plant (for you neatniks) for full sun or shade |  |
| a | Browalia Americana | Looks like blue lobelia only a much taller plant, blooms ‘til frost | 12-18 “ |
| a | Brugmansia | Angel’s Trumpets, huge very fragrant trumpets. A cream and white variegated variety is particularly nice. Overwinter inside or take cuttings. Cuttings can be kept in water all winter. Poisonous plant |  |
| a | Calendula | Deadhead regularly for blooms until frost. | 1 ½ ft. |
| a | Cannas | Grow them for the foliage. The red flowered ones are a magnet for hummingbirds. Excellent in wet areas as well. Overwinter tubers in a cardboard box. |  |
| a | Centratherum Intermedium | Pineapple sangria or Brazilian Button. Button like flowers resemble tiny purple Canadian thistles and bloom all summer. Rub the leaves to release pineapple fragrance | 1 ½ ft. |
|  | Cleome | I have a seedling that landed in a spot that floods when it rains. It is blooming profusely now and is 6 feet tall! It obviously will tolerate moisture. |  |
| a | Coleus | Grow it in full sun or shade. Instead of waning like a lot annuals/perennials, it gets better and better as the summer progresses. Take cuttings in August/September or, what I did was to grow the cuttings in water all winter on my kitchen windowsill and I took cuttings from these in late winter/early spring. |  |
| a | Coreopsis coloropsis | Coloropsis is a new series of annual coreopsis that bloom ‘til frost if deadheaded (easy with small scissors). Three colours in the series, white, pink, cream/bronze. They are blooming profusely. | 1 ft. tall |
| a | Cosmos | Pink, white, fuchsia, doubles (double click cranberries and bonbon), fluted (pied piper), semi-double, huge flowers (sonata series), shorter (antiquity). Deadhead with scissors for bloom ‘til frost. | From 1 ½ ft. to 4 ft. tall. |
| a | Cuphea | Brilliant red, purple-throated tubular flowers (which resemble baby bat faces). Also in purple. Mine self-seeded to my surprise & I had several seedlings in spring in the vegetable garden. | 10-12 inches |
| A | Delosperma floribunda stardust | I started this plant from seed. Some of it survives the winter and is now self-seeding about although it took a couple of years to achieve. The leaves feel like gummy bears. They bloom all summer, hugging the ground with wonderful little pink daisy-like flowers. |  |
| a | Dahlia | Too many to mention. There is a whole series of dahlias with black leaves in many colours at [www.masonhousegardens.com](http://www.masonhousegardens.com) . If you don’t want to bring them in for the winter, then don’t. Treat them as an annual – they are not expensive. I am thinking of giving up on dahlias sadly as they take up too much real estate and many are still not blooming as of Sept. 26th. I am going to grow cactus zinnias which look similar to some dahlias and bloom all summer. |  |
| a | Four O’clock | Mirabilis Jalapa – blooms open late afternoon. The plants form black carrot-like tubers which can be overwintered like dahlias. Excellent in pots which can be wintered right in the pot in your furnace room or cold cellar. You will see new growth in the dried up pot in spring. Neat colours – some streaked & striped. | 2’ |
| a | Fuchsia | Does well in part shade. Can be overwintered indoors or take cuttings. Flowers all summer. |  |
| a | Geranium | We all know geranium – in many colours, drought resistant. Take cuttings in August/September or bring in the whole plant late summer, prune stems to 2-3 inches as well as the roots to fit into your pot. |  |
| a | Hibiscus Manihot | Beautiful pale yellow flowers with deep purple/black eye about 5-6 inches wide. Gorgeous leaves and okra like seed pods. Save the seeds for next year. They may self-seed if you sprinkle the seeds where you want them to grow in the fall. I had one sprout. | 4-6 feet tall |
| a | Hibiscus trionum | Flower-of-the-hour. Seldom seen. Easy from seed. Cream petals, deep burgundy centres. Will self-seed readily. | 1 – 1 ½ feet |
| a | Hibiscus tropical | Overwinter inside. I have removed all leaves before bringing in as whiteflies like them. |  |
| a | Ipomea lindheimeri | A morning glory that forms a tuber that can be overwintered indoors. It has a beautiful lavender/blue flower. My first year so not how it will overwinter. Got it from [www.masonhousegardens.com](http://www.masonhousegardens.com) |  |
| a | Kiss-Me-Over-the-Garden-Gate | Persicaria Orientalis – up to 12 feet tall! Pink drooping flowers bamboo like stems. Removing the lower leaves and planted enmasse, looks like a grove of blooming bamboo. Blooms ‘til frost. Will self-seed for next year. A staple for my fall garden. | Anywhere from 3 feet to 12 feet depending on soil |
| a | Love Lies Bleeding | Amaranthus Caudatus– hate or love it! Long drooping reddish ropes that look like dreadlocks. Self-seeds readily. If you don’t transplant the spring seedlings, you will get much taller, sturdier plants. Another staple for my fall garden. | 3-5 feet |
| A | Malva Sylvestris | A cousin to hollyhocks with smaller flowers, can be striped, shades of purple/rose. Will self-seed. | 3-4 feet |
| a | Marigold | Lots of choice. I have Vanilla (creamy), Moonsong (Puffs of deep orange), Tangerine Gem (tiny orange flowers the size of a dime, forms large mound in good soil) |  |
| a | Nicandra Physoloides | (Shoo-Fly-Plant) Another self -seeder. Thick, fleshy stems which can grow to 5-6 feet, much taller in rich soil. Lavender flowers. Forms brown husks loaded with seeds – self seeder. Remove all the lower leaves to make a standard. Another fall staple. |  |
| a | Nicotiana | New hybrid Whisper Shades of Pink (2 ½ ft.), Only the Lonely (white flowers 5-6” long, evening fragrance 3-4 ft.) both bloom ‘til frost. Even though Whisper is a hybrid, seedlings from last year’s planting have popped all over and I have let them live to see what I would get. They are identical to the hybrid variety and have also produced some lime green and some white plants. I have let them all live in the tropical garden which is now literally smothered with dozens of blooming plants – fabulous effect. |  |
| a | Petchoa | A new plant cross between a callibrichoa and petunia. The plants look more like petunias but you get the more unusual colours of callibrichoas. Mine is orange and blooming profusely in 16” pots – 3 per pot. |  |
| a | Petunias vista series | Not just for pots. I grow them as groundcovers – grow 3 feet wide all around the base and are self-cleaning. Colours include fuchsia, bubblegum and silverberry. Bloom until frost. |  |
| a | Petunias other – more ground cover types | White Russian (white with a very dark eye, Raspberry Blast (two toned shades of pink), Pretty Much Picasso (purple/rose edged in green). Excellent in hanging baskets, tall pots to spill over, raised areas as well as ground covers as they all grow quite wide. Pretty much Picasso has now fizzled out but it was fantastic all summer. |  |
| a | Salvia coccinea | Lady in Red, Coral Nymph (apricot), also in white. Attracts hummingbirds. Blooms into frost if deadheaded. |  |
| a | Salvia guarantica Black and Blue | Fabulous colours of black calyx’s and navy blue flowers. Quite striking. Can be overwintered indoors. Mine had white fly over the winter so was a struggle. Better to just buy another one as they are becoming more popular. |  |
| a | Salvia splendens | Blooms 'til frost – this one comes in several colours – white, purple, red, orange, |  |
| a | Sunflowers | Too many to mention. Try the pollenless types for longer bloom. Or save and dry the flower heads of the seeded types to feed the birds in winter if they don’t get to them first. I have loads of birds flitting about the sunflowers and other seed producing plants. |  |
| a | Verbena bonariensis | Rose lavender, tall see-through stems, best planted en-masse. Attract monarch butterflies. Will self-seed readily. They have taken over the entire area around the gazebo and look absolutely stunning – in my opinion! | 2 ½ ft. |
| a | Zinnia angustifolia | A fabulous little flowered zinnia which blooms non-stop. A neat and tidy little plant – in orange, apricot, pink, cherry, white. I love this plant – the flowers turn a perfect brown late in the season. |  |
| a | Zinnia cactus | Order seeds on-line in separate colours – orange, pink, white, yellow, red. I will tell you where next month. Beautiful shaggy flowers – 4-5 inches wide until frost. | 2 ½ ft. |
| Vine | Morning Glory | Many colours. Heavenly Blue is sky blue – beautiful. Try it on a chain link fence for privacy. Flowers close for the afternoon. Train the stems counter clockwise. You only need one plant per pole or arbour as they can grow over 20 feet in one season. More flowers in poor, lean soil. They will self seed so no need to buy any plants next year. You will have zillions. |  |

**Perennials for you to try**: Besides our usual late-flowering asters and sedums and chrysanthemums, try perennials like geranium Rozanne, Russian sage, shrubs Rose of Sharon, hydrangeas (favourites are strawberry vanilla and limelight), buddleias, perennial hibiscus with dinner plate flowers (they love “wettish” or moist areas), misty red-tinged grasses like panicum Shenandoah, tall Rudbeckia triloba (dainty sprays of small black-eyed Susan’s), gaillardias, heuchera’s, Japanese anemone, shaggy and extremely tall helianthus salicifolius, to name a few. Helianthus salicifolius is now blooming in great profusion. The stems have grown to 10-12 feet high and have fallen over in the wind. They swirl and curl and twirl all over the place with yellow daisy like flowers on the ends of the stems – it is quite a sight. This “mess” works because they have their own separate bed (rounded, heart shaped about 8 feet in diameter) and do not interfere with other plants (except it is not possible to cut the grass underneath). The leaves also add to the drama as they are very narrow and droop and dangle all along the 12 foot stems. Fabulous!!!\*

These are the perennials and shrubs blooming in the garden now (September 26, 2012, zone 5b).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| p | Achillia filipendula | Fernleaf leaf yarrow, 4 ft. flat yellow flowers, ferny foliage |  |
| p | Agastache | Make sure you don’t purchase a tender perennial type |  |
| p | Amsonia hubrectii | Fine textured grass like foliage. This turns a beautiful golden colour in the fall. |  |
| p | Aster frikartii monch | Lavender daisy like blooms with yellow centres – start blooming much earlier than other asters (usually mid-July) and bloom into late fall |  |
| p | Asters | I have every aster going – don’t know all the names but hella lacy is purple, Harrington’s pink is a very tall pink. They are stunning now, taking up several spots throughout the colour wheel garden. |  |
| P | Buddleias | Still blooming are blueberry cobbler, evil ways, tutti fruitti, |  |
| p | Callirhoe Involucrata | Bright magenta poppy like flowers for a long time. Sends out long stems 3- 6 ft. Tolerates drought |  |
| p | Chrysanthemum | Hard prune these in spring when they are about 8” for shorter, stockier plants that won’t flop. Wonderful fall colours – some just blooming now and many more to go later. |  |
| p | Coreopsis redshift | Yellow with a wine-red eye. Good in poor soil. Shear in July if it flops. Long bloomer. | 2 ft. |
| p | Coreopsis Route 66 | A ring of burgundy surrounding the flower center bleeds out to the very tips of the yellow petals. Very long bloomer |  |
| P | Coreopsis Star Cluster | A perennial that flowers all summer – white | 18-20” tall |
| p | Gaillardia | These plants are blooming machines and I really like them. Keep them dead-headed for bloom until frost. They can be floppy so tie them up early in the season. |  |
| p | Geranium Rozanne | Purple with a white eye, blooms from early June ‘til frost. Excellent for raised areas, between daylilies, under shrubs, etc., as it sends long stems. May be trimmed back when you see new growth in the centre in mid-summer to keep it more compact and tidy. It is blooming beautifully right now. I love this geranium as it does not produce seed. | Sends out long stems – 3’, so place carefully |
| p | Grass Pennisetum Red Head | Green arching grass with burgundy bottlebrush flowers | 2 ½ ‘ tall |
| p | Grasses Panicums | Switch Grass. Many varieties available. Shenandoah is especially beautiful with partly red foliage and misty red seed sprays. Most admired in my garden. | Shenandoah is 4-5 ft. tall. Cloud 9 is 7-9 ft. tall |
| p | Guara Lindheimeri | Tender perennial. Butterfly plant – white or pink blooms all summer on arching stems – will self-seed if it likes you. I have it popping all over the place – I guess it likes me and I love it! It is very dainty and blooming profusely in shades of pink and white. | 1 ½ feet tall |
| p | \*Helianthus salicifolius | See above description. This plant spreads and needs a lot of room, or just remove whatever stems you don’t want to keep it in bounds. Worth growing for the foliage and extreme height alone. | Up to 12 feet |
| P | Helenium Autumnale | Comes in yellows and reds and combos of both colours. | 3-4 feet tall |
| P | Heuchera’s | Some flowers are nicer than others. The foliage makes up for the flowers. Rave-on has been blooming since mid-May – still a couple of flowers stalks now. Grow as an alternative to hostas. Morning sun is the best or filtered light. Bronze Beauty is loaded right now with white spikes. It has very large leaves. |  |
| p | Hibiscus dinner plate type | Huge flowers in shades of red (Lord Baltimore), clear white (Blue River 11), and many in shades of pink – pink Elephant, Peppermint Schnapps. Red Baltimore is still blooming in my garden as it is a sterile variety so keeps blooming instead of forming seeds. They grow very well in moist locations. | 4-5 feet tall |
| p | Japanese anemone | Beautiful but invasive groundcover. |  |
| p | Oreganum laevigatum herrenhausen | Drought tolerant, mauve pink flowers, trailing, blooms late summer – fall. Would be nice in a pot or a raised bed. |  |
| p | Perovskia atriplicifolia | Russian Sage – long purple spires for hot, dry locations | 2-3 feet |
| p | Persicaria amplexicaulis | Variety “firetail” blooms all summer until frost. Red flower spikes, groundcover. | Up to 4 ft. – much lower in poor soil |
| p | Phlox Paniculata | Favourites include Watermelon Punch, Franz Schubert, Grenadine Dream, Blushing Shortwood, Sherbert Cocktail, Blue Paradise, Peppermint Twist, Starfire. Most are finished as of now but still a few strays around – orange perfection is one. |  |
| p | Rudbeckia henry eilers | Quilled golden flower sprays. A neat tall plant. | 4-6 ft. tall |
| p | Rudbeckia triloba | Tall, sprays of small black eyed Susan’s – long bloomer, may be short lived but self-seeds. |  |
| p | Sedum | A new taller one that does not flop over is called T-Rex if you can find it. Another new one is Dazzleberry – low growing spreading type but with very large flowers clusters– mine is only in its first year so will wait for next year for better performance |  |
| Shrub | Hydrangeas | So many to choose from. Strawberry Vanilla particularly attractive in shades of pink and white to start and now solid deep rose/strawberry colour. Limelight (up to 10 ‘ tall) has tight cone-type flowers tipped in lime, turn pink later than strawberry vanilla as the weather gets cooler. Others to consider Little Lime (3-5 ‘), Bombshell (3-5’), Quickfire (blooms one month earlier than other varieties). Lacy types include Pinky Winky, Unique, Kyushu. All the hydrangeas are starting to show pink now, but none as much as strawberry vanilla – it outshines them all. |  |
| Shrub | Rose of Sharon | The double flowered ones will not seed about. Easily trained into standard form by choosing one stem and cutting out all others. Prune branches in spring by 1/3 just below a node. The chiffon series – lavender, white and blue, are all blooming right now as they are supposed to be sterile. Another sterile variety called Diana – a pure single white – is still blooming. The singles and doubles have all finished. |  |