

“Late Summer Color”

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Late-summer garden fatigue? September's a summer month – honestly. Perk up both the garden and yourself with perennial bloomers for reliable late season color. These daisy relatives share need for well-drained soil, moderate regular water and sunny conditions. I grow flowers to share in bouquets -- these produce generously.

**Daisy relatives in sunset colors:** With petal rows surrounding fuzzy circular centers, gallardia and coreopsis bounce happily into fall. *Gallardia x grandiflora*, developed by hybridizers from an American prairie native, ‘blanket flower,’ shines late into fall. A favorite beauty named ‘Oranges and Lemons’ -- with shaded colors in lively citrus tones -- started for me in July and gallops on. Remove spent flowers to encourage new buds.

Coreopsis, like gallardia, offers new colors and garden presence. Vigorous hardy perennial *Coreopsis verticillata* ‘Moonbeam’ blooms bountifully in primrose yellow. Its cousins have even stronger impact, their vivid red, burgundy, or orange looking theatrically dramatic. A new one, Coreopsis ‘Jive,’ swings with cream edges on strong burgundy petals. Add mulch late in fall to give ‘Jive’ some winter protection. It's somewhat frost-tender.

**Enjoying pinks, purples, pastels:** Softer color choices in asters and chrysanthemums remind me of Monet's paintings. Clear blue asters reflect perfect autumn skies. I grow *Aster dumosus* ‘Woods Blue;’ many other cultivars will entice you.

Chrysanthemums urge me to rub their leaves for true fall fragrance. Soft pinks, purple tones and burgundies liven the fall scene (with bountiful choices for we sunset lovers also.) Burdened with the clumsy botanical name ‘Dendranthema,’ they bloom until Thanksgiving. Just call them ‘mums’ and find a garden spot for them after they show off in containers. Many will winter over and bloom again next year. A purple beauty bought last fall buds up now for me. I can't find its tag – but of course, that never happens in your garden.

The number of buds on chrysanthemum plants staggers imagination; they're bred to pop out flowers steadily until a freeze. They do not set more buds after bloom – the seasons catch up with them, but their late show entices. Take a bouquet to a friend; fresh color comes from these daisy relatives.