

Year Round Gardening

Landscape Choices for Colorful Fall Berries

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When you think of fall color in the landscape, you are likely envisioning the vibrant reds, oranges and golds of fall foliage. The more discriminating eye can also appreciate the enduring glory of fall berries. Many woody plants have berries that ripen in September and persist through November, or longer.

If your landscape could benefit from the addition of shrubs that mature at around 3 ft., consider Hancock Coralberry (*Symphoricarpos x chenaultii* 'Hancock') or 'Lowboy' pyracantha. Hancock Coralberry is a spreader, growing wider than tall. A five year old plant can be 3 ft. high and 12 ft. wide. The grey green foliage is small but the clumps of coral red berries are abundant and persist through winter. Use this plant as a facer in front of tall shrubs, a turf reducer or filler on slopes and under other trees. It will grow in moderate shade.



Photo courtesy of Fredricka Bogardus

To soften retaining walls try Cranberry cotoneaster, *Cotoneaster apiculatus*. This plant has a low, spreading growth habit, and features stiff branches that gracefully arch over retaining walls. In summer the glossy foliage is showy. Cranberry sized berries appear in late summer. These bright red berries are often abundant, lasting into the new year.

Viburnums are berry bearing shrubs in the 5-6 ft. range. Most species have both an ornamental bloom and richly colored fall berries. One viburnum well suited to this locale is *V. rhytidophylloides* 'Alleghany'. Alleghany is a 1997 Plant Select winner. It is truly a plant with four seasons of ornamental interest. The deep green, well textured leaves are semi-evergreen. The clusters of white blooms in spring are followed by red berries in autumn, turning to blue black in winter. This plant is deer resistant. *Viburnum lentago*, also known as nanny berry is native to isolated areas in Colorado. Nannyberry is another plant with 4 season of interest, including spring bloom, glossy summer foliage, striking red to orange fall color and blue black

edible fruits persisting into winter. The habit of this plant is that of a small tree, maturing at about 25 ft.

Birds, pollinators and other wildlife benefit from berries, particularly in fall. If you garden in the urban wildland interface, understand that bears, raccoons and others may also be attracted by berries. When choosing woody plants for the landscape, be sure to understand their mature size requirements, growth habit and preferred exposure. For the best success, put the right plant in the right place. CSU Extension has several Fact Sheets on shrubs in the home landscapes that contain additional information about features, requirements and options for woody plants. Go to <http://extension.colostate.edu/publications-2/> and search 7.422, 7.414 and 7.415 for additional information.

When you have questions, Colorado State University Extension has research based answers. Get answers to your horticulture questions by visiting ask.extension.org or by calling a Colorado Master Gardener Volunteer at 520-7684, 9:00 to 12:00 Monday – Thursday.