

## Year Round Gardening

### **A Few of My Favorite Plants**

Fredricka Bogardus, Colorado Master Gardener

Plant selection may be the most challenging tasks for a gardener. Finding a plant that works well and doesn't cause any problems is a joy. When selecting plants at a minimum consider your soil, sun exposure, minimum winter temperature, irrigation availability, and maintenance requirements. If you don't know what kind of soil you have consider a soil test, Colorado State University Extension has mail-in kits to send to The CSU soil lab in Ft. Collins for analysis. Beyond that consider whether you want rapid growth or slow growth. If you need a lot of coverage quickly then rapidly spreading, vigorously reseeding plants may be your choice, in the short term. Understand that as your garden matures these early garden heroes may become your nemesis, looking a lot like weeds. It is okay if you decide you are done with them in favor of better behaved plants.

Here are a few of my favorite plants.

#### ***Allium 'Millenium'***

Named the 2018 Perennial Plant of the Year this is a great plant. This clump forming plant in the onion genus is attractive throughout the growing season. It is a pollinator magnet attracting butterflies and bees. Unlike other ornamental onions it blooms late in summer. The flowers are spherical purple flowers borne on umbels, the bloom lasts about 4 weeks. Foliage emerges in early spring, in glossy, grass-like clumps. Foliage persists and is



attractive until frost. Plants are hardy to -40°f. "Millenium" are deer and rabbit resistant, like full sun, are drought tolerant, and don't reseed. They can be divided every 3-4 years as the clumps enlarge. Divide them after the foliage dies back in the fall.

*Photos courtesy of Fredricka Bogardus*

***Greek yarrow (Achillea ageratifolia)***

This sun loving, drought tolerant ground cover is a great addition to your garden. Gray green foliage hugs the ground, small white flowers bloom from June through August. This is not an aggressive spreader so is quite appropriate for smaller spaces or as a rock garden plant. It tolerates a wide range of soils, but must be well drained. Greek yarrow is hardy to -20°f, it is deer and rabbit resistant.

***Dwarf globe Colorado blue spruce (Picea pungens 'Glauca Globosa')***



This is an intensely blue specimen of Colorado Blue Spruce. It is a slow grower with a maximum height of 4-6 feet. It is easily pruned to shape and limit height. It is a great garden accent, hardy to -40°f, deer and rabbit resistant. This shrub will provide good winter interest. It grows well in full sun with well drained soil. This plant is typically sold as a grafted plant. There are two versions; one is grafted high on the rootstock giving it a whimsical

lollipop effect, the other option is a low graft where the plant hugs the ground. Both will add year-round interest to your garden.

Have fun looking for new specimens for your garden and identifying your favorites.

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