

Native Plants with Great Fall Color

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There is still time to plant before the ground freezes. So why not consider these native plants that have great fall color? Of course, these plants also have other benefits of native plants such as promoting biodiversity by supporting our birds, butterflies, pollinators and other organisms, ease of care and year-round beauty.

Here are some natives with great fall color:

Thread-leaved Bluestar, *Amsonia hubrichtii*, (at right) is an herbaceous perennial that gets fantastic fall color in shades of bright gold with reddish tones, especially when planted in full sun. It grows to 2-3 feet tall and wide, gets powdery blue, star-like flowers in late spring and has feather green foliage that looks nice all summer until it takes on its fall color. As a bonus, it is deer resistant.



Bottlebrush Buckeye, *Aesculus parviflora*, (at left) is a large shrub whose leaves turn a rich buttery yellow in the fall. It gets large fluffy flower clusters in July, grows twice as wide as tall (8+ feet) and is thicket-forming. It does best in moist part- shade but is very adaptable, is native to the east coast and is deer resistant.



The combination of our native **Flowering Dogwood**, *Cornus florida*, **Northern Spicebush**, *Lindera benzoin* and **Sassafras**, *Sassafras albidum*, put on a lovely fall show. If you have an old hedgerow on your property or woods-edge, you may already have this combination growing, so do not clear it out! One of these photos is from the hedgerow on my property.



- **Flowering Dogwood**, so familiar to many gardeners for its spectacular spring flower display, also gets great fall color. The leaves turn red to crimson-purple and are accompanied by very showy red berries that are loved by birds.
- **Sassafras** trees have excellent yellow/purple/red fall color, grow from 30 to 60 feet, spread by root suckers and can form a sassafras grove if the suckers are not removed. They are excellent for naturalized plantings but can also be grown as a specimen.
- **Spicebush** is a large multi stemmed shrub, growing 6 to 12 feet tall, whose leaves turn an attractive yellow in the fall. It gets tiny fragrant yellow flowers in the spring. The female plants produce clusters of bright red fruits that are a high-energy favorite of birds.

