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Fall Back and Relax – Enjoying Fall Color

– by Miri Talabac, Manager, Woody Plants, Beltsville

If springtime in the garden is a symphony of color, then fall is the much-anticipated encore. While pansies and chrysanthemums are producing multitudes of flowers, arguably the most impressive display lies in autumn leaves. Rich and brilliant hues hidden all season burst forth from trees and shrubs and give the garden that last bit of warmth and energy before winter sets in.

Trees are certainly the best-known landscape plants for fall color, and several species have a veritable confetti of hues in their canopy. The most widely recognized are the maples, with sugar, red, Japanese, and the trifoliolate maples all providing brilliant shades of red, scarlet, orange and yellow. The familiar crape myrtles have a similar color range. Less widely known – but equally deserving – are Persian parrotia and sweetgum with plum tones added to the spectrum above. Serviceberries and hawthorns provide smaller-statured alternatives with similar colors of plum-red and orange-yellow.

For somewhat more single-colored options, consider an oak tree. Scarlet, pin, or red oak are favored for their intense scarlet and russet-reds. Black tupelo (a.k.a. black gum) and sourwood also explode in bright red while the leaves of flowering cherries are more of a bronzed red. Dogwood and franklinia each have red to wine-colored fall foliage, with a more purple flush on white ash. Stewartia boasts wine-red to orange; dawn redwood, a deciduous conifer, turns coppery-orange; and witchhazel turns red-orange or gold-orange, depending on the variety. Katsura colors are almost apricot-yellow with a reportedly spicy scent. Beech leaves typically fade to a soft golden-brown or tan as they persist into winter. Tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), a dominant tree in our native forests, sports golden yellow fall foliage. Other regional natives such as yellowwood, fringetree and redbud also turn gold to soft yellow. Ginkgo and whitebarked Himalayan birch flush bright yellow while green ash and linden yellows are more muted.

Many shrubs also provide excellent fall color and should be considered for adding interest beneath trees or in tighter spaces around the yard where they can be appreciated at eye level. Burning bush, perhaps the most recognized for this, is far from the end-all and be-all of shrub fall color. If you love reds, try chokeberry, cotoneaster or nandina, the latter of which may even keep those colorful leaves all through the winter. Oakleaf hydrangeas also hold their plum and wine-red tinged leaves late, often into early winter. Yellow-oranges and red-oranges arise from spiraea and fothergilla. The plum overtones in some varieties of deciduous azaleas are an added bonus. Weigela can carry a variety of

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BEHNKE'S AT BELTSVILLE

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Meet: Jill Gonzalez

A high energy level and plenty of plant expertise make Jill Gonzalez ideally suited for her job as manager of two busy departments: Seasonal Plants and Perennials.

"I enjoy working with plants," Jill says, "they don't talk back!" She prefers to be outside or in the greenhouses. "No office job for me, I am a very active person and working at the Nursery is a perfect fit."

Jill grew up in Spring Mills, PA, and earned a Bachelors of Science degree in Horticulture in 1986 from Penn State University. She was hired by Behnke grower Hank Doong shortly thereafter. She has learned a great many things over her years at Behnke's and has particularly enjoyed learning the ins and outs of growing Easter lilies and poinsettias.

Jill met her husband Jose when they both worked for Behnke's. (Jose is now a director of a Toys R Us store.) Their son, Chris, is a freshman at Penn State, majoring in engineering. Jill says, "I am very happy and proud that he chose to enroll at Penn State, my old alma mater!" Now that Chris is away at college, she lavishes her attention on two dogs, Rudy and Trinka.

In her spare time, Jill enjoys gardening, reading, and most of all, exercising. She is a Certified Aerobics Instructor and Personal Trainer at a local fitness center, and she teaches a class involving yoga, tai chi and pilates. You'll often find her working out at the gym, teaching, or training members.

In her other spare time, Jill plays championship tennis! Her team was crowned number one in 2004 and 2005.

Next time you see Jill at our Beltsville store, say hello – if you can catch her!



Fall Color, from front cover

colors also, most notably in the cream-and yellow-variegated forms, which become blushed with pink and orange. For something really unusual, try vitex, with leaves that turn mocha-brown with a hint of purple.

Try spicing up the partly shady corners of the garden with the colors of clethra (yellow), itea (burgundy to scarlet), viburnum (plum, wine and scarlet) and leucothoe (evergreen but flushes plum-burgundy). And although most bigleaf hydrangeas don't have impressive fall color, try the new 'Lady in Red' with the promise of burgundy-red infused leaves with red veins.

Vines can give you unexpected fall color too — try crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*) in sun, where its semi-evergreen leaves turn deep plum with rosy undersides, or climbing hydrangea in shade with its yellow fall foliage.

No matter which colors or combinations suit your tastes, autumnal colors usually show best when mixed with evergreens or used against a green backdrop. Notice how the colors of the fall woods really stand out with the scattering of olive-green and blue-green pines and dark green hollies and hemlocks. Garden conifers such as pines, spruces, junipers, falsecypress and yews and broadleaf evergreens like hollies, cherry laurel, boxwood and others will greatly enhance fall foliage colors when used in a mixed planting. And you can still mix foliage textures — tuck in perennials where shrubs would be too crowded...grasses with their fine wispy blades, the incised leaves of geraniums, the low, rounded leaves of plumbago and others will color up nicely in autumn. So plant for fall foliage color in the garden and you will be rewarded with a display of color rivaling that any bloom! **SD**

Calendar of Events

Saturday, September 24, 2005

Fall Festival & Behnke Main Street

Join us for some fall fun as we celebrate the new season along with a group of talented local artisans, who will have their wares on display and be ready to serve you.
Beltsville store

Saturday, October 8, 2005

Holiday Shop Grand Opening and Behnke Main Street

See back cover for more information about our fabulous Holiday Shop. Get your shopping off to a successful start!

*Holiday Shop: Beltsville and Potomac
Behnke Main Street: Beltsville store*

Saturday and Sunday, October 15 & 16, 22 & 23, 2005*

Pumpkin Carving Weekends

Choose your own pumpkins, and a design from the dozens we have on file — from easy to challenging and everything in between! We'll show you how to transfer the design and carve like a pro — it's easy if you have the right tools, and we do!

Beltsville and Potomac stores

**tentative dates, subject to change*

Saturday, October 29

Little Shop of Horrors!

Don't miss our Halloween event! Lots of fun for everyone!

Beltsville store



You'll find a huge selection of pumpkins and wonderful designs to choose from during our Pumpkin Carving Weekends. We'll supply the tools, the designs, and a little help if need be!

Distinctive Holiday Arrangements from Behnke Florist



Behnke Florist offers a full range of floral services to meet all your holiday needs. The finest quality cut flowers are arranged in award-winning designs to grace your holiday table, mantle, doors and more. Decorated wreaths and door swags, too. Custom orders are welcomed.

A beautiful arrangement from Behnke Florist makes a thoughtful gift, and is always appreciated — even by those who already have everything! Worldwide and local delivery. Call Behnke Florist, located at our Potomac store, for all your holiday floral needs: 301-983-4400.





Great Gardens The United States

by Larry Hurley, Perennial Specialist

The United States Botanic Garden lies at the foot of Capitol Hill on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

Visitors to the National Mall in Washington, D.C. tend to focus on the monuments and museums, but horties know that the Mall is also home to some terrific gardens. Several are tucked in amongst the various Smithsonian buildings, such as the intimate Ripley Garden, a personal favorite. The most ambitious, however, must be the complex of indoor and outdoor gardens that comprise the United States Botanic Garden (USBG), at the foot of Capitol Hill. I recently toured the USBG with Executive Director, Holly Shimizu.

Between the constraints of limited space and limitless wordiness, I hope to entice you to visit the USBG. Wordy, but not flowery—a tough combination for a garden writer. For directions, event listings, and heaps of additional information, visit the Garden's website at www.usbg.gov.

The USBG traces its history to our Founding Fathers. Washington, Jefferson and Madison envisioned a national botanical garden at the "seat of government;" it came to be located across from the U.S. Capitol. Like other facilities in the Capitol Complex, the USBG is administered through the Architect of the Capitol, an agency whose primary

function is to serve the needs of Congress. There are currently two areas of the USBG open to the public — the Conservatory and Bartholdi Park — with a third under construction. The National

Garden, opening in 2006, is billed as an "Eden on the Mall." It will include a Mid-Atlantic native plants garden, a rose garden, and a First Ladies' Water Garden. The USBG Production Facility, five miles away (off I-295) in southwest DC, is "the largest greenhouse complex associated with a public garden in the United States." Here, plant collections and seasonal crops are grown and maintained for display in the Conservatory and Bartholdi Park. The Production Facility has an annual open house (usually in February) when the public is invited to view the greenhouses and collections of plants, including the famous orchid collection.

The Conservatory is the large, glass-domed structure at the southwest corner of Capitol Hill. The structure was built in 1933 and was completely renovated at the turn of the century, reopening to the public in December 2001. The inviting

sandstone terrace ties in well with the naturalistic design of the nearby National Museum of the American Indian. The terrace has tables and chairs where you may enjoy a picnic lunch, or just a

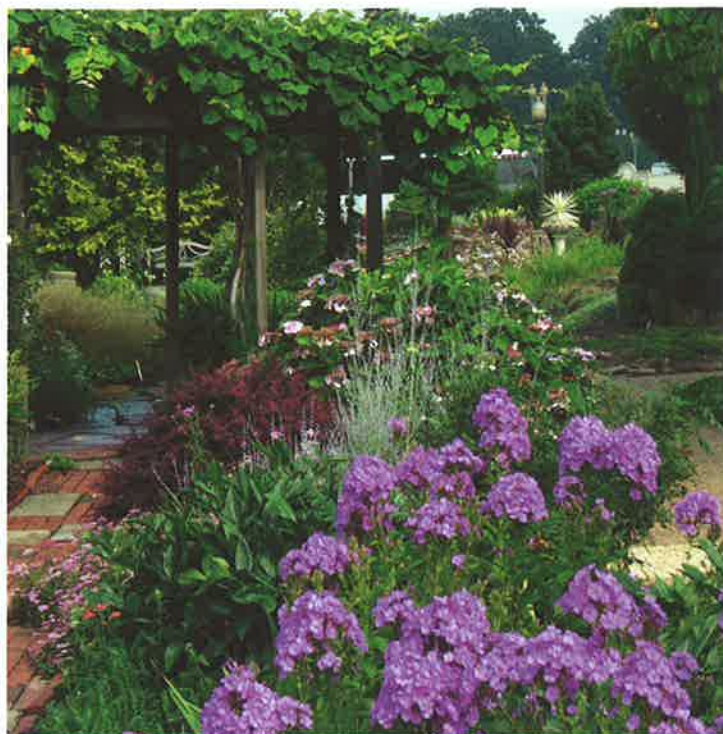


The Garden Primeval features "prehistoric" plants.

nd States Botanic Garden

chance to rest your feet. It is beautifully decorated with dozens of colorful container plantings, part of the current special show, "Pots: From Necessity to Artistry" (through October 17, 2005). Signage explains the history and styles of containers, and the show continues inside one of the galleries of the Conservatory. I should note that throughout the Conservatory and Bartholdi Garden, plants are labeled. Make sure to bring a camera, and a notebook to jot down the names of plants—you are bound to see dozens of new and exciting plants and you don't want to add label thief to your list of sins.

Inside, the Conservatory offers a series of greenhouses, each with its own theme, several air-conditioned teaching exhibits, and an open interior courtyard in which many marginally winter-hardy plants are grown. The Conservatory is bright and immaculately



Grape Arbor with Phlox blooming in foreground.



The pond in the "Southern Exposure" garden.

tive displays. Between the gorgeous plantings and the related exhibits, you could easily spend two or three hours in the Conservatory. We toured on a particularly muggy July morning, and the air-conditioned exhibit galleries were a welcome respite from the heat outdoors.

Equally impressive is Bartholdi Park, an outside garden with the Bartholdi Fountain as its focal point. The metal fountain, designed by the builder of the Statue of Liberty, can be admired without the interference of cascading water at the moment, as it is about to undergo some restoration work to fix some leaks. The three-acre park is laid out in a series of intimate "rooms", e.g., the White Garden, the Native Garden, and so on, set up to give examples of landscapes you could adapt for your home, rather than the formal gardens of, say, Longwood. There were a number of roses in bloom, none of which requires spraying for the typical rose diseases. As with the Conservatory, the philosophy for Bartholdi Park is to spray as little as possible. The garden contains a number of historic and unusual plants, and, like the Conservatory, is maintained in an immaculate condition. Holly says that the Conservatory, Bartholdi Park, and the Production Facility employ 57 people, 30 of whom are horticulturists. They also rely upon a large number of dedicated volunteers. Holly and her staff set and fulfill the highest of standards.

clean, and the plants look amazingly fresh and healthy. (Many times when one visits conservatories, the plants look crowded, "tired," and buggy. Holly Shimizu says that many of the plants are rotated frequently to and from the Production Facility. That way, they remain fresh and the staff does not have to resort to pesticides in the Conservatory beyond the occasional horticultural oil application. As much as I liked the plants (and I like plants more than most things), as a retailer I was bowled over by the teaching exhibits, with larger-than-life colorful plant sculptures and interac-

Continued next page

Grand Old Tulips

by Randy Best, Bulb Specialist

With all the hype about new, new, new all the time, isn't it nice to know there are still some good old dependable varieties of bulbs that no spring garden should be without?

Take one particular tulip class, the Darwin hybrids. These tulips are the result of a cross between Darwin tulips and *Tulipa fosteriana*. It took the Dutch three and a half centuries to accomplish this feat, but it's been worth the wait.

In Darwin hybrids you find a very special combination of traits. The enormous flowers can exceed four inches in diameter, the long weather resistant stems stand up tall when other tulips are lying prostrate, and the bulbs naturalize beautifully. (Naturalizing refers to the casual planting of bulbs in drifts to look as if they have occurred there naturally, that is, without human intervention.) I have had some of these Darwin hybrids produce enormous flowers from bulbs which were planted and left untouched for over ten years. I can't tell you that I've grown all the Darwin Hybrids but I certainly can tell you my favorites. Really they all are. For a rich vermilion red, there is nothing that can

surpass 'Apeldoorn,' which I consider to be one of the finest varieties ever put out on the market. 'Golden Apeldoorn' is a sport of 'Apeldoorn' with a lovely deep golden yellow coloration.

There are fine scarlet reds including 'Oxford' and 'Parade.' One of the most striking and fairly recent introductions is 'Banja Luka,' a deep golden yellow with an intense scarlet red along the edge. If you like a rich tangerine orange, you might want to consider 'Daydream,' or for a classic ivory, try 'Ivory Floradale.'

And did I tell you that I have a new favorite now? This one is a dream... 'American Dream' in fact. White centers are lightly veiled in a soft, stippled overlay of red, thereby giving it a pink effect edged in rich carmine. This one is a real beauty.

Now many of you may be thinking, "I can't grow tulips because of the voles," or "I can't grow tulips because of the deer." Don't give up! Adopt a cat, learn to enjoy venison, and read the article on the next page. ☞



United States Botanic Gardens, from page 5



This 30-foot fountain was designed by Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, who also designed the Statue of Liberty.

Throughout the year, the USBG hosts events. One such event is the annual orchid exhibit, cosponsored with the National Museum of Natural History. Alternating locations between USBG and the Museum, it will be back at the USBG in 2006. In addition to the big shows, there is a constant offering of music, lectures, and demonstrations. Listings are available online, and you may also pick up the USBG Calendar of Events at the Conservatory or at Behnke's. Admission to the United States Botanic Garden, and many of the events, is free. Some workshops have a nominal fee to cover costs of materials. The Conservatory is open every day (except Inauguration Day) from 10 to 5, with occasional evening hours for special events. Bartholdi Park is open from dawn to dusk every day.

Public gardens are great places for ideas and relaxation. Use them to rev up and unwind. Get away from it all, or discover it all. But make sure to take time to visit soon; it's what George Washington would have wanted. ☞

Timely Tips to Reduce Deer Damage this Winter

by Larry Hurley, Perennial Specialist

Fall is the time to act to reduce deer damage to your landscape this winter. Increasingly, our customers are looking for deer management solutions. The most effective solution is fencing, and it has to be high, eight feet or more. For those of you with severe deer feeding pressure, this is probably your only real choice. For those gardeners like me, that see an occasional deer track or a couple of dozen headless tulips (variety 'Ichabod Crane'), your strategy is to encourage the deer to feed elsewhere. (Your neighbors will *not* thank you.) Remember: a deer's job description is not particularly lengthy, and right up near the top is: "Eat." So they are pretty good at it.

As seasons change, the preferred food sources of deer change as well. The evergreen shrubs that the deer ignored while they were munching on your leafy hostas in the summer months suddenly look pretty appealing in the late fall and winter when most plants have either dropped their leaves or disappeared by craftily going dormant or dying. Deer develop new browsing trails as food sources change with the seasons, and repeatedly follow them through the season until new food sources begin to appear. By applying repellants before you see damage, you may encourage the deer to move along and not include your landscape in the current or next season's browse buffet.

There are many repellants, all with advantages and disadvantages. I used one this spring and summer called Deer Solution which smells of cinnamon rather than rotten eggs, which is a plus as far as I'm concerned. We had deer tracks through the tulip bed in the spring, but with several applications of the repellant, we did not experience any losses, while last year they ate every tulip we planted and during the summer nibbled the odd hosta. ("Odd" because they left only stems.) So, was it the repellant, or some other combination of factors? I don't know.

Everything I have read emphasizes the need to rotate through different repellants to reduce the risk that the deer will adapt to them, so I know I should get out there with some other stinky repellant soon to increase my odds. Note that if the winter is severe, the repellants will not be effective as the deer become increasingly hungry. Dealing with deer is like predicting the weather: it all comes down to percentages and imponderables, and we tend to notice when things go wrong.

Fall is also good time to plant deer resistant plants (notice, this is "deer resistant" and not "deer proof"). Perennials will root out and continue to develop underground during the fall and over the winter and you will have a much bigger clump than if you wait until spring to plant. Our deer resistant plants are indicated with a logo on our signage.

An excellent list of deer resistant plants is available online from Maryland's Home and Garden Information Center (Do a Google search for "HGIC" and you can click on to the site. You want to print out the fact sheet entitled "Resistance of Ornamentals to Deer Damage.")

I have emphasized deer repellants, because they are easy to apply, but there are other strategies, including changing the design of your yard, or fencing off individual plants for the winter, which are outlined in publications such as "Controlling Deer Damage in Maryland," also from the HGIC. For detailed recommendations of repellant application by season, visit the website of the Institute of Ecosystem Studies which is located in New York; the link is: http://www.ecostudies.org/lma_IES_recommendations.htm. Other articles on deer archived at this site may be found by using the site's search engine.

We wish you good luck in your "gardening with wildlife" adventures. ☞



Behnke's New Holiday Shop Recalls a Christmas Past

Our new Holiday Shop will feature a large variety of gifts and decorations, many imported from around the world. Just as in the splendid Behnke Christmas Shop of years past, our new shop will carry unique ornaments, nutcrackers and other fine quality collectibles, as well as a host of whimsical gifts and decorations that are sure to delight!

This year we are proud to unveil an exclusive "Behnke" nutcracker. This original design, which is a limited edition, signed collectible of exceptional quality, depicts an old world gardener complete with potted plant, watering can and spade. He was custom designed and made by the Christian Ulbricht company, one of Germany's largest makers of nutcrackers. In addition to the gardener nutcracker, you will find several other wonderful nutcracker designs. If you're interested in these nutcrackers, shop early, quantities are limited!

Our "Hearth and Home" collection will bring great beauty to your home in the fall and through Thanksgiving, and a wonderful selection of wreaths and garlands will help you decorate for the holiday season beyond.

You'll love the enchanted forest filled with whimsical winter delight, and the traditional beauty of the elegant "Victorian Village." Feast your eyes on our "Candy Cane Forest," chock full of Christmas goodies for your home, and kids of all ages will enjoy our "Family Fun" Christmas display.

Behnke Nurseries' Christmas Shop was created in 1966 by Sonja Behnke Festerling. It was one of the first garden center Christmas Shops in the area. A few years later, Ele Behnke, Sonja's sister-in-law, joined in and shaped the shop into a Washington tradition – a unique place where one could be certain to find exquisite decorations and ornaments made with care by skilled artisans – ornaments that reflected the cultures from which they originated.

This year we are proud to unveil an exclusive "Behnke" nutcracker. This delightful design, which is a limited edition, signed collectible of exceptional quality, depicts an old world gardener complete with potted plant, watering can and spade.

The Holiday Shop will open at both the Potomac and Beltsville stores on Monday, October 3 (Grand Opening Saturday, October 8)! We look forward to seeing you there!



*See Page 7
Discourage Deer...*



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