

## Dazzling Shrub Colors

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The common Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) is zoned three and should be given consideration in our landscaping. This shrub has very good fall color with the leaves turning a bright red and in October an interesting maroon star-shaped flower shows up on the stems. These flowers are fragrant and generally hidden until the leaves fall off. It grows six to twelve feet tall and has heart-shaped leaves. There are several cultivars available, which include, 'Mohonk Red' which has lots of brick-red flowers, and 'Harvest Moon' which has lemon-yellow flowers. It is said that when the seeds mature they can pop out to 20 feet. An extract of the bark has long been used for medicinal purposes. The branches have been used as "divining rods" in trying to locate water. Wild game birds like the seeds of this shrub.

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Gold medal plant winners just came out.<sup>1</sup> These woody plants are nominated by home gardener, garden designer, horticulturists, landscape architect, nursery owners and propagators. Winners are evaluated and selected for their superb eye appeal, performance and hardiness. The *Diervilla sessilifolia* Cool Splash 'LPDC Podaras' is zone rated 4 and is generally referred to as the southern bush honeysuckle. This low-growing shrub is vigorous and very adaptable and it spreads by suckers, so it is best used in a mass planting. This plant will grow in all light conditions but prefers full sun where its variegated, glossy leaves develop vivid tones of green and cream. This plant has small yellow flowers, on new wood and blooms from June until August. This plant only gets two and one half feet tall and three and one half feet wide. This plant will work very well for a small boarder planting and the variegated color will really set this plant apart from others.

The next Gold Medal Plant I want to mention is the *Cornus sanguinea* 'Midwinter Fire' dogwood. This particular dogwood is in its prime in mid winter with its superior winter color interest. The stems from fall through spring have an intense display of yellow, orange and red tones, especially when the plant is situated in front of a dark backdrop. This shrub prefers full sun and a hard spring pruning to produce the best colors. It also has an abundant cluster of white flowers appearing in May. This large shrub does spread by suckers, so a mass planting is advised as it can reach eight feet tall and have a spread of ten feet, with a hardiness zone rating of four what can go wrong with this plant.

Therefore, if you are looking for some color especially in the fall-winter check out these three shrubs. It may take a little time to locate these as they may not be very common at your local nursery, but now you have a quest for planting next spring.

Have you ever searched clover patches to find a four-leaf one? Well now scientist from the University of Georgia and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation in Oklahoma have discovered the gene in white clover which

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<sup>1</sup> American Nurseryman September 2010

causes this trait.<sup>2</sup> What this means is in the future we will be able to select a variety of white clover which all the plants will carry this trait. So for those wishing to have a little luck of the Irish in there yard be on the watch for this clover in the future.

The University of Wyoming and the United States Department of Agriculture, Sheridan county Office cooperate. The University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

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<sup>2</sup> Associate Editor Viveka Neveln, The American Gardener, Crop Science July/August 2010 Report