

Garden Inspirations

Winter is all about Berries!

By Joe Covington

Nothing warms our dreary winter days like the colorful sparkles of all the various displays of berries produced by plants ready to shine when chilling weather begins. Obscure in the summer when “green” berries blend in with foliage, they finally burst out of hiding for the winter!

All of the pyramidal-shaped hollies such as Nellie R. Stevens, Savannah, Foster, Liberty, East Palatka, and Oakleaf, begin to look like Christmas trees aglow with red ornaments. Possumhaw is a deciduous holly whose branches are loaded with red berries that are very visible and make a spectacular show once the leaves drop. And as if eye appeal wasn't enough, holly berries provide the added bonus of being one of the few food sources for birds during the winter months.

Some of the prettiest seasons for the ever-popular Indian Hawthorn, are fall and winter when they radiate with clusters of rich dark purple berries. This is especially true of the new disease resistant varieties such as Eleanor Tabor, Georgia Petite, Calisto, and Olivia (white blooms).

American Beautyberry, Pyracantha and Cotoneaster are a few of the small to medium size shrubs with prolific berry production. Japanese Yew, a shade plant which looks tropical, has beautiful cobalt blue berries, and Nandina Compacta and Harbor Belle (Flirt) Nandina, which also do well in shady spots, have big bunches of bright red berries.

These are only a small sampling of the many wonderful plants you'll find showing off their colorful fruits this time of year.....so enjoy a berry wonderful winter!

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