

October 31, 2014



Year-Round Blossoms for the Garden
By Kit Smith
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For those who prefer gardens full of color, here are a few suggestions of plants and trees with extended flowering times.

The white spiky Gaura, Sweet Alyssum, Scabiosa columbaria - the pastel colored pincushion flower, and hybrid Gazania can bloom all year long. So too can the Gerbera Daisy. Its color really peaks in early spring and late fall.

Cosmos is a showy flower in both the fall and summer. Other plants can come into flower twice a year, if they are pruned after both flowering seasons. Geranium sanguineum -- the bloody Cranesbill -- will flower in spring and late summer. Spiraea, bridal wreath variety, will flower twice. Chrysanthemum blooms for a long stretch during the fall and for a shorter time in spring. Clip it to a maximum of six inches from the soil for it to bloom again. Penstemon also flowers in spring and fall.

Lupine hybrids, sweet pea-like flowers, bloom in June and July and, if they are deadheaded, again -- although not as vibrantly, in late summer.

Ligularia prefers afternoon shade and will send up three to five foot stems with four-inch yellow daisies from June through October. Colorful Aster blooms in the same period and easily spreads and regrows.

Zinnia elegans -- the star white, the Common and Shasta Daisy, and the fragrant Gardenia -- will bloom from May through November.

Rose of Sharon is a violet addition to the yard that blooms up its stock starting in summer and flowering all the way through until the first frost.

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Most Dianthus bloom all spring and summer, and even longer if deadheaded. Statice self-sows and also flowers in spring and summer.

Shrubs with extended flowering periods are the Western Redbud, Fremontodendron -- Flannel Bush, Ceanothus and Mock Orange. Cut the Mock Orange down to the ground in alternating years to rejuvenate it.

Two trees with lengthy flowering seasons are the hybrid Prunus x subhirtella 'Autumnalis' -- the Winter Flowering Cherry tree, that will bloom double white or light pink in fall and early spring. If the winter is particularly warm, the tree may bloom then also. Also, the Crape Myrtle adds lovely color all through summer.

Do you have soil that makes it impossible to grow anything because of clay or rock content, or maybe you have physical constraints that make traditional gardening difficult? If so, plan to join UCCE Master Gardener Eve Keener at this Saturday's free class: Raised Bed Gardening. Benefits of raised bed gardening, how to build the beds, what materials to use and how to maintain them for long term bounty will be presented. The November 8th class is from 9:00 am to noon at the Government Center Hearing Room, Building C at 2850 Fairlane Court.

UCCE Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512. Walk-ins are welcome at the office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardener website at http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Gardeners/ and <http://www.facebook.com/pages/El-Dorado-County-Master-Gardeners/164653119129>.