

## Fall Landscaping Guidelines

Although landscape plants can be successfully planted throughout the year, Labor Day generally signals the start of the fall buying season at local garden centers. Fall is a great time to install landscape plants. The cooler weather makes it somewhat easier for plants to adjust to being transplanted, and many times, plant roots continue to grow even after leaves have dropped. Retailers also often offer discounts this time of year. When shopping for plants though, it is always a great idea to pre-plan what you are going to do in the yard. Impulse shopping at the garden center can create problems for many years to come. This can be seen where large trees have heaved sidewalks because they were planted in the park strip or where shrubs overgrow sidewalks, making it difficult to walk by.

When determining what to plant in the landscape, local USU Extension horticulture/agriculture agents can be a great resource. USU Extension also has many useful fact sheets online. For a complete guide to trees that grow well in the state and how to properly care for them, reference the following:

[http://extension.usu.edu/forestry/Reading/Assets/PDFDocs/NR\\_FF/NR460.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/forestry/Reading/Assets/PDFDocs/NR_FF/NR460.pdf). Another publication titled “Selection and Culture of Landscape Plants in Utah” is also useful. It was authored for use in southeastern Utah, but the information is applicable in most of the state. It can be accessed at: [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/HG\\_500.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/HG_500.pdf).

During the fall season, it is also important to be flexible when deciding on specific plants. The most popular trees can often sell out as the season progresses. This is not necessarily a bad thing, though, because the most popular trees are not always the best suited to our unique growing conditions. Luckily, there are usually a number of trees that will work for varying conditions in the yard. Larger shade trees include Japanese zelkova, common hackberry, bur oak, English oak, Kentucky coffee tree and American linden. These trees are underutilized, generally pest and disease resistant and at least some of them should be available locally. Smaller trees with comparable characteristics include hedge maple, many hawthorn varieties, newer varieties of crabapple in which the fruit sticks to the tree, serviceberry and some flowering cherries. There are also many shrubs that are adapted for use. I have always been a fan of dwarf lilacs and some of the ground cover junipers. Barberries, rose of Sharon, cold hardy boxwoods, sumacs, smokebush and yews are also good choices.

Fall is also a great time to start spring blooming perennials. Doing so now actually increases the flower show in the spring and gives perennials a head start. If they can be found, rock cress, sandwort, soapwort, creeping phlox and candytuft are just a few that offer excellent spring color. It is also time to install spring blooming bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, crocus and hyacinth. Pansies and violas can be planted for excellent fall and spring color. They will overwinter just fine in most Utah climates.