

Stunning Fall Flowers

Fall is here. What a wonderful time!

Chrysanthemums get a lot of attention in fall and that attention is well deserved, but there are other perennials for us in North Dakota that are equally stunning.

Start with New England aster. Its pink and purple flowers are irresistible to us, bees and butterflies (Fig. 1). Asters are easy to grow and prolific bloomers. They have tall stems that make for striking bouquets. 'Purple Dome' is a big seller.

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*) is one of my favorites. Its mounded plants are adorned with golden daisies. The chocolate brown seedheads persist through winter, attracting birds. 'Goldsturm' (Fig. 2) is a classic cultivar; a true Hall of Fame perennial.

Russian sage (*Perovskia*) tolerates drought and grows well here. It features silvery foliage and tall, airy spikes of blue flowers. 'Denim 'n Lace' is popular for its short and sturdy stems (Fig. 3).

Stonecrop (*Sedum*) is one of the finest perennials for dry sites. Look for varieties with eye-catching foliage in summer as well as radiant flowers in fall. 'Autumn Joy' (Fig. 4) has been a standout for decades and the new Sunsparklers® are outstanding groundcovers.

The flowers of Japanese anemone are lovely as they sway in the breeze.



'Honorine Jobert' has pure white blooms (Fig. 5). It grows especially well as a border in partial shade.

One of the most interesting fall bloomers is black snakeroot (*Actaea*). A favorite in shade gardens, the coppery-purple plants send out flower spikes that look like fuzzy white snakes (Fig. 6). Fascinating!

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Plant Health Care

Fruits and Vegetables



Ripen Tomatoes Indoors

Place your blushing, crack-free fruits on a newspaper and then place another newspaper sheet over them. This traps ethylene, which fruits emit when ripening. Keep out of direct sun. Room temperatures develop fullest flavors.



Harvest Pumpkins

Light frosts will not harm the fruit, but harvest before a killing frost (28°F). Leave a few inches of stem attached. Do not bruise. Cure in a warm (80°F) spot for 10 days for long-term storage.



Harvest Popcorn

Wait until kernels are hard and husks are dry. Remove husks and store cobs in mesh bags. Keep in a dry, warm and airy place. After a few weeks, pop a sample. If satisfactory, seal kernels in airtight jars.



Frosty Apples

Apples on trees can tolerate temps approaching 25°F before frost damage occurs. If they freeze, wait to thaw before picking. Use promptly.



Bird Damage to Apples

Thirsty birds can peck on fruits. Diseases may enter these wounds. Harvest and discard wounded fruits.

Trees and Shrubs



Herbicide Injury

Sprays on lawns this fall to control weeds have led to another wave of trees exposed to herbicide drift. Leaves become stretched or cupped. Trees typically survive drift.



Hackberry Nipple Gall

Gnat-like psyllids lay eggs in leaves, stimulating the development of chambers where nymphs develop. Tree is not harmed. When nymphs emerge in fall, they may be a nuisance until frost.



Buckeyes

Nuts of Ohio buckeye are dropping. These nuts have the gleam of a deer *buck's eye*, hence their name. They are toxic to humans although squirrels seem to like them.

Plant Health Care

Flowers



Big, Bold Tulips

Darwin hybrids boast the biggest blooms on the sturdiest stems. With proper care, they'll bloom for many years; longer than any other standard tulip. Select big bulbs; at least 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Plant early in fall to establish strong roots. Sprinkle 1 cup of 10-10-10 time-release or a similar bulb fertilizer per 30 sq. ft. over bed. Rake and water deeply.



Birdsnest Fungus

This fungus decomposes organic matter in soil and wood mulch. The “nest” collects water and the “eggs” splash out, later releasing spores. It is harmless but can be destroyed by raking.



Measles on Peony

Avoid overhead sprinkling. Remove all foliage this fall. Mancozeb or other fungicide may be sprayed when plants are 4–6 inches tall next spring. Consider transplanting/dividing next year if plants are crowded or growing in shade.

Lawns



Kill Perennial Weeds

The best time to kill dandelion, thistle and other perennial weeds is in mid to late September. The weeds will channel the herbicide down into their roots as they prepare for winter.



Seeding

Sowing now is risky, especially in north. Mid-September is the recommended deadline. Keep soil moist to promote quick establishment. An option is to sow in November; this seed sprouts in spring.

Nuisance Insects



Boxelder Bugs

Bugs will congregate on sunny walls to stay warm. Seal crevices along doors and windows. Spray with 5 TBSP of detergent per gallon water. Continue spraying as bugs appear.



Crickets

Seal windows, doors and the foundation. Reduce outdoor lighting. Remove debris near foundation. Insecticides may be sprayed near entries. Crickets die from frost. They will starve if they get indoors.



Hornets

Kill hornets if the nest is in a hazardous place. Apply a knock-down spray in the hole of the nest. Spray at night; a cool night in the 50s is best. Otherwise, the hornets will die after a hard frost.

Weather Almanac for September 16–22, 2018

Site	AVG FROST ^{1,2}		TEMPERATURE ²				RAINFALL ^{2,4}				GROWING DEGREE DAYS ^{2,5}			
	Light	Killing	Sep 16–22				Sep 16–22		2018		Sep 16–22		2018	
	(32°F)	(28°F)	Avg	Norm	Max	Min	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm
Bottineau	9/21	09/27	48	55	64	32	0.37	0.32	9.63	12.89	21	54	2118	2015
Bowman	9/18	09/30	54	55	83	35	0.87	0.29	11.38	10.90	49	60	2123	2094
Carrington	9/26	10/05	52	56	83	32	0.70	0.40	9.61	14.85	35	58	2320	2169
Crosby	9/22	09/29	46	53	65	31	0.90	0.27	8.64	11.22	13	51	2097	1872
Dickinson	9/22	10/03	52	55	80	34	1.21	0.35	12.96	12.49	39	62	2265	2074
Fargo	9/27	10/05	57	58	94	42	1.73	0.53	16.32	15.39	40	58	2657	2321
Grafton	9/24	10/04	53	55	90	35	0.85	0.51	12.85	15.08	31	56	2296	2027
Grand Forks	9/20	10/05	54	55	92	38	1.36	0.44	14.39	14.74	33	56	2398	2077
Hazen	9/14	09/27 ⁶	52	57	71	35	0.97	0.33	9.58	12.64	37	69	2238	2278
Hillsboro	9/28	10/06	56	57	94	39	1.83	0.47	14.18	15.10	44	56	2423	2193
Jamestown	9/25	10/04	52	56	81	35	1.03	0.46	18.85	14.44	30	56	2235	2152
Langdon	9/17	09/28	48	53	79	34	0.43	0.41	9.58	14.71	17	46	2014	1734
Mandan	9/23	10/01	53	57	75	38	0.96	0.34	14.97	13.67	37	58	2361	2162
Minot	9/28	10/07	49	55	67	35	0.70	0.32	9.29	12.94	25	50	2246	1974
Mott	9/18	09/28	53	56	78	35	0.87	0.31	9.12	11.75	41	64	2252	2166
Rugby	9/21	10/04	49	54	72	33	0.36	0.41	10.28	14.45	25	55	2184	2009
Wahpeton	9/27	10/04 ⁷	58	59	95	41	1.33	0.63	16.02	16.05	44	63	2584	2424
Watford City	9/14	09/25	50	55	71	33	0.64	0.21	9.41	10.79	36	59	2259	2084
Williston	9/22	09/29	50	58	69	31	1.08	0.26	10.93	10.72	32	68	2258	2351
Wishek	9/18	09/27	53	56	80	37	1.51	0.27	14.03	12.40	32	54	2233	1974

DAYLENGTH (Sep 24, McClusky, center of ND)³ LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS¹

Sunrise: 7:31 AM Daylength: 12h 7m Sep 29–Oct 3: Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Above Normal
 Sunset: 7:37 PM Change since Sep 17: –23m Oct 1–7: Temp.: Below Normal; Precip.: Above Normal

^{1,2,3}Sources: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, www.sunrisesunset.com, respectively.

⁴Measurements begin April 1.

⁵GDDs for garden vegetables are not available. GDD data in this table are for corn, which responds to temperature as most vegetables grown in gardens. Data begin May 1 with base minimum and maximum temperatures of 50 and 86°F, respectively.

^{6,7}Frost data for Beulah and Campbell, respectively.

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