

Banishing Boring Yards

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Complete List

January: The days are getting longer and the garden is slowly waking up. Not a lot of flowering plants but twigs and berries will dominate the garden.

- Twig dogwoods - Don't be afraid to prune them hard every year
- Purple Fountain Beech - Weeping branches accent the garden
- Witch Hazel - Several varieties available including Arnold Promise, Diane and Jelena
- Sarcococca - Confusa, ruscifolia, humulis. Evergreen, fragrant flowers
- Bergenia varieties - Dragonfly series is new from Terra Nova with different colored flowers and winter foliage but the old standards are good too
- Thuja Ember Waves - Colorful conifer that changes with the seasons
- Paperbark Maple - Showy winter peeling bark
- Stachyurus Sparkler - Interesting shrub that flowers winter through early spring
- Mahonia Soft Caress - A little tender for worth the chance

February: The pace is picking up with many more bloomers to choose from and good fragrance too.

- Viburnum "Dawn" - Fragrant pink flowers November through March, good fall color too
- Cornus mas - Long blooming yellow flowers, good fall color, sweet little tree
- Contorted filberts - Green/red leaf, Red Dragon is a new filbert blight resistant variety
- Camellia varieties - Mostly the sasanqua flavors and their hybrids
- Winter Hazel - Pauciflora and spicata (I really like to golden leaf one)
- Daphne odorata marginata - Showy foliage/incredible fragrant flowers
- Hellebores - Multiple varieties, colorful single/double flowers, evergreen foliage
- Pulmonaria varieties - Spotted foliage and blue and pink flowers
- Double English Primroses - Tough as nails and very perennial
- Snowdrops and Winter Aconites - Two early blooming bulbs
- Gold Heart Bleeding Heart - My absolute favorite shade perennial
- Clematis Armandii - Wonderful fragrance and evergreen foliage
- Edgeworthia Chrysantha - Early blooming flowers and fragrance too

March: Think of this as either late winter or early spring. The magic is starting to happen with lots of bulbs and perennials and a few shrubs.

- Forsythia Magical Gold - Nice dwarf plant with large flowers and good fall color
- Daffodils - So much more than just King Alfred and they are perennial

- Winter Heath and Heathers - Long bloomers (November-May) and colorful foliage
- Candy Tuft - Purity is the most common. New varieties have larger flowers
- Arabis - A dependable low grower
- Aubretia - Also a reliable spreader
- Creeping phlox - Several colors to choose from, Candy Stripe is a fun one
- Pasque flower - Several colors to choose from, the seed head is as pretty as the flower Red Flowering Currant King Edward V11, a hummingbird magnet
- Flowering Quince - The Double Take series is a huge improvement
- Pieris - Enchanted Forest Collection from Monrovia is new and improved
- Pieris Little Heath - An excellent variegated dwarf form
- Pieris Brookside Miniature - Really dwarf, good for containers or small gardens
- Disporopsis pernyi Sichuan Jade - An evergreen faux Solomon's Seal
- Disporum Night Heron - New purple foliage and flowers are striking
- Epimedium varieties- Super for dry shade there are many flavors
- Brunnera varieties - Jack Frost, Alexander's Great, Looking Glass, Silver Heart

April: Things are really heating up, no excuse for a boring yard this month.

- Rhodies and azaleas - The backbone of the northwest garden
- Darwin Barberry - Love the orange flowers on this cutie
- Sorbaria "Sem" - New spring foliage is showy, summer flowers are a nice treat
- Magnolia - Black Tulip, Felix Jury, Butterflies and Yellow Bird
- Japanese maples - Another staple of our gardens
- Daphne Eternal Fragrance - Blooms all summer believe it or not
- Mukdenia - New fan shaped foliage with red tones
- Mukgenia - New hybrid between Mukdenia and Bergenia, go figure

May: If your garden is boring in May then there is no hope. Sad, very sad.

- Itoh Peonies - Cross between tree and herbaceous peonies, incredible
- Heucherella Sweet Tea - Nice substitute for Heuchera
- Persicaria Fire Tail - Long bloomer, maybe not quite in bloom this early

June: A shoulder month, the glory of spring has faded but the splendor of summer has not arrived. Shop for early summer blooming perennials to fill in the gap.

- Korean Dogwood - Heart Throb, Stellar Pink, Starlight and Venus
- Kalmia varieties - Exquisite detail in the flowers
- Saxifrage London Pride - Variegated foliage and dainty flowers
- Sedum Angelina - Foliage but also flowers
- Centranthus ruber - One of my favorites but a bit social
- Schefflera taiwaniana - Drama from the unexpected
- Pseudopanax laetus - Actually a winter bloomer but exotic evergreen foliage
- Ghost fern - Great foliage and sturdy upright fronds

July: Okay, the summer bloomers are kicking in.

- Stewartia pseudocamellia - Blooms June or July depending on weather
- Smoke tree - Both purple and golden varieties with “smoke-like” flowers
- Hydrangeas - Both the macrophylla and PG types are good summer bloomers. Also, Purple Passion aspera variety from Monrovia and the evergreen climber Taiping Shan
- Blue potato vine Glasnevin - Long summer blooming vine but tender
- Red hot pokers - Gobs of varieties with a range of colors and early, mid and late bloomers
- Hardy fuchsia - Genii, Army Nurse, Neon Tricolor, Pat’s Dream are good examples
- Begonia bonfire - Red orange flavors
- Coleus - Lots of new colors to choose from
- Itea ‘Little Henry Sweet Spire’ - Fragrant summer blooms, fabulous red fall color. ‘Clethera’, summer sweet, fragrant flowers in pink or white, yellow fall color
- Campsis radicans Summer Jazz - New compact grower in a couple of colors
- Pineapple lilies - Oakhurst has fabulous dark foliage
- Lobelia cardinalis - Deep red flowers and dark bronze foliage
- Salvia ‘Amistad’ - Incredible purple flowers are a hummingbird magnet
- Salvia Golden Delicious - Yummy pineapple scented golden foliage
- Cardoon - Drama personified

August: Ah, summer in the northwest and the blooming is easy.

- Oxydendron - Summer blooms, incredible fall color
- Caryopteris - Total bee magnet with blue flowers
- Himalayan honeysuckle ‘Jealousy’ - Gold foliage, exotic flowers, green bamboo-like stems in winter
- Dahlias and cannas - It’s their time to shine
- Sedum Autumn Joy - Fall flowers covered with bees
- Joe Pye Weed - Magnificent late summer bloomer. ‘Baby Joe’ is more dwarf
- Ornamental grasses - Here are some of my favorites
 - Bowles Golden Sedge
 - Gold Bar Miscanthus
 - Morning Light Miscanthus
 - Orange Sedge
 - Ogon Japanese Sweet Flag - standard and the minimus selection
 - Black Mondo
 - Everillo Sedge
 - Northern Sea Oats

September: With a bit of water and fertilizer the garden should still dazzle.

- Tiger Eyes Sumac - Fabulous golden foliage, neat ‘antlers’ in winter
- Magic carpet Spiraea - A spring bloomer but will repeat in September if sheared after the first bloom

- Plumbago - Cobalt blue flowers in late summer
- Bugbane 'Black Negligee' - May be done blooming by now. Dark wicked foliage with fragrant flower in late summer
- Schizostylis - A reliable fall bloomer in several shades of pink to salmon
- Hypericum Magical Series - Several different colored berry forms
- Helenium varieties - Good color range and sequence of bloom times
- Japanese Anemone 'Wild Swan' - Actually blooms all summer. Pink is a dwarf
- Musa basjoo - More drama all summer, sometimes even blooms/bananas
- Persicaria Brushstrokes - Good foliage but not much in the trade any more
- Persicaria Painter's palette - Looks like a coleus but is perennial
- Toad lilies - Several variations, reliable late bloomer
- Hedychium Tara - Unbelievable tropical flowers on this hardy false ginger

October: Okay, summer is over, time to think about fall color.

- Ginko - Unusual leaf shape, fabulous yellow fall color, interesting bark in winter
- Burning bush - Try the dwarf Cole's Select
- Enkianthus - Spring bloomer but also good fall color and in maturity attractive bark
- Cyclamen hederifolium - Blooms in the fall, mottled foliage remains through the winter
- Cyclamen coum - Many variations of foliage patterns and blooms later in winter
- Boston ivy - Amazing fall color
- Virginia creeper - Same story as above
- Chokeberry 'Aronia Brilliantissima' - Showy white flowers in spring, striking fall color

November: Evergreen foliage and berries come center stage.

- Compact strawberry bush - Glossy foliage, orange berries, fall blooming and shaggy bark
- Callicarpa 'Profusion' - Incredible purple berries in fall/winter
- Itea Henry's Garnet - Strong fall/winter color, leaves hang on a for long time
- Nandina varieties - 'Sienna Sunrise' is a stunner, 'Fire Power' is a keeper and there are several other new varieties
- Lonicera Baggesen's Gold, Lemon Beauty and Twiggy - All evergreen with purple tinges in winter
- Distylium cultivars - Several new selections from Bailey Nursery
- Golden Duchess Hemlock - Gold foliage becomes intense in winter

December: The circle is almost complete.

- Mahonia Lionel Fortescue - Blooms in December, attracts hummers
- Fatsia - Fabulous tropical foliage, blooms in winter. Camouflage and Spider Web
- Camellia sasanqua - Fall bloomers like Yuletide and Pink-a-Boo
- Heuchera varieties - A wide range of foliage color
- Euphorbia - Evergreen perennials hardy for winter, bloom several months in spring

- Coral Bark Maple - Cool bark color in winter
- Pacific Fire Vine Maple - Same color as above but easier to grow
- Skimmia Reeves - Self-fertile, flowers and berries in winter
- Sundance Mexican Orange - Golden foliage and white fragrant flowers in early spring
- Chief Joseph pine - Incredible yellow needles in winter only, then back to ho hum green
- Leucothoe varieties - Scarletta, Rainbow, Curly Red, Little Flames
- Pyracantha - Can't beat the red or orange berries in winter
- Arum italicum - Reticulated foliage in winter, summer dormant
- Aucuba varieties 'Picturata', 'Mr. Goldstrike', 'Rossanie' - Big berries in winter, colorful foliage year 'round
- Fatshedera lizei - Essentially a vining Fatsia

