

Chelsea Retirement Community - 2011

Garden Guide No. 3

FALL

For many of us who live in Michigan, complaining about the weather is something of a hobby. But make no mistake: there is great joy in the change of season, and we are indeed fortunate to have such wonderful variety in our surroundings.

While we're sorry to see flowers slowly disappear with the coming of autumn, we can delight in the colors of the fall season. At CRC we have many interesting plants that provide fall color. You may be familiar with some of them, like the burning bushes sprinkled around the campus. In the 2010 Fall Garden Guide we featured some plants with fall color as a secondary attribute, including Itea (Virginia Sweetspire), Hamamelis (Witch-hazel) and Clethra, to name a few. In this year's Guide, we have a few jewels you may not recognize. We hope you'll take a few minutes on a fine fall day to meet and appreciate them!

Carpinus caroliniana (American Hornbeam) is a medium-sized tree found in the garden at the Kresge entrance. It has distinctive cylindrical clusters of flowers called catkins that look like nuts with wings. In fall, its colors range from yellows to oranges to reds. As the winter progresses, you can appreciate its bark. Other common names for *Carpinus* are Musclewood (because of the muscle-like appearance of the trunk) and Ironwood (because of the hardness of the wood).

Hydrangea quercifolia (Oakleaf Hydrangea) is a fabulous shrub. It has lovely white cone-shaped flowers that bloom mid-summer and turn a dusky rose as they age. Its huge, leathery, oak-shaped leaves turn a deep maroon in the fall, providing gorgeous contrast to the more common colors of the season. Scattered throughout the campus, you'll find these shrubs at The Cottages, at the entrance to Kresge and the Kresge courtyard, and in the Memorial Garden. It's such a versatile plant, adapting to both full sun and almost full shade.

Parrotia persica (Persian Witchhazel) is a wonderful, although lesser-known tree. Fall colors range from purples to reds to oranges. Its cinnamon-colored bark peels with age, providing added interest in winter. Look for it in a small bed to the right of the front entrance to Towsley Village.

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(American Hornbeam)



Hydrangea quercifolia
(Oakleaf Hydrangea)



Parrotia persica
(Persian Witchhazel)



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