



MISSION: BEAUTIFICATION ... CONSERVATION ... EDUCATION

Planting and Nurturing

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Merry Berry-Color in Your Winter Garden

Now is not the best time for producing plants with vibrant blooms, but there may be some less obvious ways to bring color into your garden during the colder months. The most interesting to me is to consider shrubs and trees that produce berries in the fall and winter months. In many plants, berries follow beautiful colorful leaves in the autumn. They pull double duty as they can also be clipped and arranged into your holiday wreaths, garlands and tablescares.

Here are a few shrubs and trees that produce nice berries:

A. Hollies (Evergreen)

The most familiar hollies are the evergreen ones that have bright red berries such as American holly (*Ilex opaca*). Some hybrids such as 'Savannah,' 'East Palatka,' and 'Fosteri' are robust with heavy fruit and fewer spines on the leaves. Yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) from the coastal plain is an evergreen holly that is also often used because of its small, spineless evergreen leaves. If you want blue berries, plant gallberry or inkberry in a moist area of your garden.

Hollies (Deciduous)

Georgia has a number of deciduous hollies, all of which have red fruits. The leafless winter stems can be gorgeous in your landscape. Some cultivars include possumhaw (*Ilex decidua*) and winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*). The big bright red berries are stunning on bare winter stems. Remember that some hollies need pollinators, and you need to organize your garden so that the female that sets berries has a suitable male planted close by. For winterberry, you need a male species such as Jim Dandy.

B. Crabapples

Crabapple trees can come in a variety of heights, fruit sizes and forms. A couple of varieties for you to consider include:

Lancelot-Malus 'Lanzam'- A medium tree usually under 10 feet with round to oval form, white blooms in spring and 3/8 inch diameter golden fruits that persist well into late winter. The leaves turn a beautiful golden color in autumn, and it is well suited to small space gardens.

Scarlet Brandywine- Malus 'Scbrazam'- An open rounded 15-20 feet tall tree, Scarlet Brandywine has ruffled dark rose double blooms in spring. Its fruits are 5/8 inch pumpkin-orange in color. The tree has green leaves tinged with maroon and beautiful yellow-orange fall color.

Pink Princess-Malus toringo var. sargentii 'Parssi'- A low spreading dwarf tree (6-8 feet tall) with rose-pink springtime flowers. Its foliage emerges purple and turns bronze-green during summer. Fruits are dark red and 1/4 inch in diameter.

C. Viburnums

Viburnum shrubs produce eye-catching berries in a variety of colors, including pink, yellow, blue and deep purple-black. The berries can go through a sequence of colors as they ripen, and some have berry clusters that showcase several different hues at once. Viburnum shrubs can't pollinate its own flowers so make sure you plant more than one species or a closely related alternative.

According to Walter Reeves, two of the best fruiting viburnums in Georgia are tea viburnum 'Viburnum setigerum' and Linden viburnum 'Viburnum dilatatum'. Just as with hollies, good pollination is a key to production of fruit and berries, so remember to set another variety of the same viburnum nearby.

D. Nandinas

Nandinas are a favorite in Georgia with many varieties that produce berries ranging from yellow to red. A major problem with nandinas is that ingesting their berries and foliage can be highly toxic to pets and wildlife, particularly in late winter, when these berries may be among the only food remaining in a garden, and birds such as cedar waxwings, feed on them and die.

E. Dogwoods

Dogwood trees are generally small trees known for beautiful flowers, attractive foliage and bark, and showy fruit. One thing that I like about the kousa dogwood tree is that it is an important food for wildlife. It is estimated that more than 60 species of birds, insects and mammals feed on dogwoods.

F. Callicarpas

A purple or white variety called beautyberry is known for one remarkable feature: bright purple berries that grow around the plant's stems in plump clusters. They are virtually maintenance-free once established and both heat- and drought-tolerant.

Pictured below are internet images of Dogwood Kousa, viburnum, beautyberry, and crabapple berries.



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Garden Displays and Holiday Lights

Berries provide a beautiful natural winter wonderland, but for many of us, our kids and grands may also like an evening enjoying holiday garden lights. Atlanta Parent magazine recently provided a list of the best holiday light displays in and around Georgia. Here is an excerpt from their article. <https://www.atlantaparent.com/christmas-lights-atlanta/>

Light Displays:

- **The Winter Wonderland Train at Pine Mountain Gold Museum**
 - Meet Rudolph, the Winter Queen, Santa, Mrs. Claus and more before embarking on a train ride to see almost a mile of lights and decorations. Dec. 4-21.
- **Country Christmas Nights at The Rock Ranch**
 - Hop aboard the Christmas Express Train featuring a snowflake tunnel and a dancing Christmas lights show. Dec. 6-8, 13-15 and 20-22.
- **Holiday Lights of Hope at Hobgood Park**
 - Walk-through light and animated displays, visit with Santa and more. Dec. 7-23.
- **Mountain Country Christmas In Lights at Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds**
 - Enjoy caroling, arts and crafts, food, lights, decorations and entertainment throughout the event. Through Dec. 28.
- **Christmas Light Extravaganza at Warbington Farms**
 - Experience a synchronized light show at the pavilion, stroll through the Barnyard aglow with hundreds of lights, then enjoy a hayride to the Field of Lights. Through Dec. 29.
- **A Country Christmas at Pettit Creek Farms**
 - Take a drive or hayride through lights, take photos with Santa and his reindeer, experience a live nativity and more. Through Dec. 30.
- **Lights of Life at Life University**
 - Drive through tons of holiday lights on display around the campus. Through Dec. 31.
- **Fantasy in Lights at Callaway Gardens**
 - Drive through more than 8 million twinkling lights and a garden decorated for the season. Through Jan. 4.
- **Enchanted Garden of Lights at Rock City**
 - Guests can walk through four themed areas of holiday lights and activities, including Yule Town and North Pole Village. Through Jan. 4.
- **Stone Mountain Christmas Lights at Stone Mountain Park**
 - Enjoy holiday magic with evenings full of festive music, dazzling lights, The Polar Express 4-D Experience, the Enchanted Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony and visits from your favorite holiday characters. Through Jan. 5.
- **Magical Nights of Lights at Lanier Islands**

- Drive through lighted displays such as the North Pole Express, Wizard of Oz and The 12 Days of Christmas. Through Jan. 5.
- **The Chinese Lantern Festival at Centennial Olympic Park**
 - View more than 25 handcrafted lanterns of land and sea animals as part of the themed "INTO THE WILD." Part of the International Winter Wonderland. Through Jan. 5.
- **Holiday in the Park at Six Flags Over Georgia**
 - View more than one million LED lights and dozens of Christmas trees, visit with Santa Claus and ride the park's popular attractions. Through Jan. 5.
- **Garden Lights, Holiday Nights at Atlanta Botanical Garden**
 - Countless bulbs light up the garden with Nature's Wonders, Orchestral Orbs, Radiant Rainforest and Model Trains. Through Jan. 11.

Enjoy your berries, garden lights, family and friends this holiday season.

Be Well,

Linda Doiron

The Hokey Gardener

