

## TREES for ALL SEASONS

How to get the biggest bang for the buck by selecting trees and shrubs with multiple season interest

by John Raver, Edrich Farms Nursery

For the primary caretaker of a golf course, fall is the perfect time to evaluate landscape needs. The unfolding palette of colors nature provides plus cooler brisker temperatures draw out even the most reluctant golfer. Proper planning and planting could be the little extra that draws consistent crowds — and holds them throughout the year — particularly in the fall — and, if it's mild, into winter.

To get the most for your landscaping dollar, try asking yourself one question concerning the aesthetic value trees or shrubs: How many seasons of interest does it have?

Two of the most popular trees are still champions for multiple seasonal interest, the Florida dogwood (*Cornus florida*) and the Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*).

Dogwoods start the growing season by flowering — either white or pink blossoms. In summer they sport dark green foliage arrayed in a unique full layered look, unless you have chosen a variegated variety such as Cherokee Daybreak or Cherokee Sunset whose foliage is white/green or yellow/green. In the fall, depending on the cultivar, the leaves change from russet or maroon to a bold red while the berries redden. Then, as the leaves fall, the berries are exposed in contrast to early frosts, enticing many feathered friends to alight and feast. Flowering pears (*Pyrus calleryana*), with many improved varieties from Red Spire to Chanticleer, also follow this scenario. Both presently on the market.

In recent years, many indigenous red maples have been

hybridized to provide varieties from which you can literally pick the fall coloration—bright yellow, tanga orange, or scarlet (October Glory, Red Sunset, Firedance, etc.). Of course maples are renowned as shade trees and provide wonderful habitat and cover enough to satisfy any ornithological enthusiast. Furthermore, the family of maples contains cultivars that grow to only 25 to 30 feet with a spread equal to or less than the height. They have fascinating leaf shapes. For example, the amur maple, which colors up to a brilliant yellow/red, to the paper-bark maple which, when the bronze to russet leaves fall, fully exposes its reddish-brown exfoliating bark! Imagine that against a backdrop of pure white snow from a late winter snowfall.

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A new arrival on the ornamental shade tree list is the Cork Tree (*Phellodendron amurense*). This versatile tree may have only two seasons of real interest — full dense dark green summer foliage and a brilliant yellow fall show — but it's an outstanding performer as to ease of care and adaptability. The Macho Amur cork tree is relatively disease- and pest-free, and adapts well to harsh, droughty pollution-packed, poor soil conditions.

It is well worth researching all aspects of plantings to ensure the proper choice for any given site.

The shrub zone is equally important in rounding out the fall color story. As an understory planting, our very own American shadblow service-berry (*Amelanchier canadensis*) is a star performer. In spring this versatile shrub/tree provides a spectacular show of white blossoms as does another low-growing shrub/

tree—the Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus Virginicanus*). Both provide berries that darken through the summer and by fall, when they turn from yellow to burnt orange, that—at least in the case of the Fringe Tree—persist into winter.

For a fiery red display, go for a hedge of *Euonymus alata* compacta. This shrub does well by itself or in groups, and the winged bark and orange berries, carry it admirably into the colder months.

Two other ornamentals are worth mentioning for their contribution to the autumn scenery. First, are grasses, with their fountainlike reeds of gently wind-blown greenery topped by plumes of various colored seed heads that persist well into winter. Changing from whites and light purples to tan and wheat colors, they also offer multiple seasons of beauty.

Second, don't forget ever-greens such as hollies and spruces. True, they don't change color, but

their form and year-long foliage provide a perfect balance or anchoring beauty to fairways. Further, their dense growth and fruits—berries/cones—besides supplying winter interest, are helpful to a wide variety of wildlife.

The idea of addressing a little white sphere with the awesome driving force of a two-iron would have much less impact if the decor were drab and dull. The backdrop could be your very own carefully planned, multifaceted landscape that changes mood along with the temperature and length of daylight. I can think of no other urban sport that combines athletic skill with the ability to refresh the spirit in a well-constructed naturalized environment. It can be the pause that refreshes best as one mentally goes over the successful feeling of watching the dimpled orb float past spectacular reds, yellows and oranges of carefully planted trees.



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