

Ten Locations in San Francisco, Marin, San Mateo and Contra Costa

Richmond District
3rd Avenue between
Geary & Clement
(415) 752-1614

Marina District
3237 Pierce Street
Chestnut & Lombard
(415) 440-1000

San Rafael
1580 Lincoln Ave. just off
Hwy. 101
(415) 453-3977

Kentfield
700 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
at Wolfe Grade
(415) 454-0262

San Bruno
675 El Camino Real
(650) 869-6000
3 blocks south of I-380

Sunset District
2700 Sloat Blvd.
46th & Sloat Blvd.
(415) 566-4415

Novato
2000 Novato Blvd. at
Wilson
(415) 897-2169

Mill Valley
657 E. Blithedale at Lomita
(415) 388-0102
401 Miller Ave. at La Goma
(415) 388-0365

Danville
828 Diablo Road at El Cerro
(925) 743-0288

Garden Design Department
401 Miller, Mill Valley
(415) 388-3754

Open 7 days a week – 8:30am to 6:30pm

**Winter hours start November 4th
8:30am to 5:30pm**

Visit Sloat on the Web: www.sloatgardens.com



420 Coloma Street
Sausalito, CA 94965-1428



Great plants and great advice to help them grow!

8 SLOAT NOTEBOOK October/November 2007

October & November Gardening Guide

Plant

☞ Stop by Sloat for all your fall decorating needs – we have **pumpkins, gourds,** and **mums**. Look for **cyclamen** in late October or early November. Now is the best time to plant **foxglove, canterbury bells** and other biennials.

☞ Select and plant **maples** and other trees for fall color.

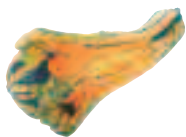
☞ Plant fall & winter color:

Violas and **pansies** are perfect

for creating mass color in containers or flowerbeds. Available in a variety of hues, these plants are also great as ground cover for spring bulbs. **Iceland**

poppies are a wonderfully vibrant option this fall, along with **snapdragons**.

☞ For a hardy and unique alternative, consider planting **ornamental grasses**.



Grasses require little upkeep and can create a wonderful screening effect against the house or fence.

☞ Plant container shrubs, perennials and trees. Winter rains will help develop a strong root system.

☞ Fall is a great time to plant ground covers and sweet peas. See Sloat staff for recommendations.

☞ Select bulbs for winter forcing and spring bloom. Begin chilling those that need an artificial winter. **Tulips, crocus** and **hyacinth** need 4–6 weeks of refrigeration before planting.

Fertilize

☞ Apply a lawn fertilizer and pre-emergent to control annual bluegrass and other weeds in your lawn and flower beds. Also, aerate and fertilize the lawn with **E.B. Stone Nature's Green**.

☞ Top-dress perennial beds, azaleas,

camellias, and rhododendrons with **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus** and feed with 0-10-10 fertilizer monthly until bloom (**E.B. Stone Organics**).

Prune/Maintain

☞ Prepare planting beds for winter. Clear weeds and rocks. Till soil and add soil amendments.

☞ Divide the roots and rhizomes of perennials such as agapanthus, yarrow and dianthus. You may dig up summer blooming bulbs, including gladiolus and dahlias. Lift and store begonias after they bloom in peat moss.

☞ Prune Japanese maples while still in leaf.

☞ It's time to get your bird feeder out for winter!



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About this Newsletter: The Gardener's Notebook is published 7 times per year by Sloat Garden Center for the education and enjoyment of Bay Area gardeners. Information is collected from Sloat's expert staff, current horticultural publications and Sunset's Western Garden Book. Send address corrections to: 420 Coloma Street, Sausalito, CA 94965. or online at www.sloatgardens.com/notebook/update

Gardener's Notebook

Volume 21, No. 6

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

October/November 2007



Sloat Garden Center's
**Postcards from
the Patch**



Oh great gourds!



Cinderella pumpkins are so unique...



Miniature pumpkins - very cute!

FALL CLEAN-UP

PUMPKINS & SQUASH

HOLIDAY PREVIEW

LAWN ALTERNATIVES

Lawn alternatives: Get rid of that lawn!

The big green lawn glorified throughout American culture in recent decades is starting to get replaced with smarter, *greener* choices that work with (rather than against) our mild wet winters and long dry summers. Lawns do well in England, where it typically rains one day in three with an annual average of 30 inches, but the average annual rainfall for the Bay Area is 20 inches!

Some local gardeners are using low-growing shrubs, succulents, ground covers and native plants to reduce the amount of water, fertilizer, weed-killer and mowing time needed to maintain a lawn. But that doesn't mean they are sacrificing beauty and color. You can experiment with Mediterranean, shady woodland, rock garden and prairie/meadow lawns in place of grass.

If you wanted to replace a small front lawn entirely you might try:

- A combination of succulents, shrubs and perennials: Hemerocallis, Kniphofia, Aeonium, Aloes, and Carex testacea around a grouping of large picturesque rocks.
- Around a birdbath or a statue of St. Francis, try Correa, Monarda, Penstemon and Salvias.
- Try Limonium (Sea Lavender), Blue Oat Grass, Echeveria, and Phormium among driftwood pieces for a coastside garden.
- Plant Rockrose, Lavender, Oregano, and Scented Geraniums for fragrance around a rustic bench.



If you have a tired-looking rectangular back lawn, try enlarging and curving the border. This will reduce the lawn size and give you more space to add color and textural interest with Cotinus 'Smoke Tree', Leucadendron, Loropetalum, Cuphea ignea, Euphorbia 'Chameleon', Libertia and Coleonema 'Sunset Gold'. You can also place a patio/seating area in the lawn using flagstone, gravel or bark instead of cement. Plant Chamomile or Woolly Thyme between the stones for fragrance.

For the shady garden you can replace your struggling lawn with patches of Ajuga 'Carpet Bugle', Campanula portenschlagiana, Baby's Tears, Corsican Mint or Fragaria chiloensis. Tuck in a roomy chair for a place to cool off and wind down.

If you have a large area to cover, some suitable ground cover-type shrubs are:

- Abelia 'Prostrata', Acacia redolens, Arctostaphylos 'Emerald Carpet', Ceanothus 'Point Reyes' or 'Yankee Point', Correa 'Dusky Bells', Cotoneaster horizontalis, Punica 'Nana' and Myoporum parvifolium.
- Phormiums, succulents and grasses would add drama with contrasting texture and color.
- Try a few of our own native plants and support the native bees too with Rhus "Lemonade Berry," Mahonia, and the tough but adorable Santa Barbara Daisy.

After planting don't forget to apply **Concern Weed Prevention Plus** (easy to use, all natural and corn gluten based) to keep any weed seeds from germinating and mulch with shredded, fine or medium bark to conserve moisture.

If you must have a lawn for kids or dogs, keep it small and use a drought tolerant, deep rooted fescue such as bolero or bonsai.

Fall tree & plant care

Fall is one of the best times to plant trees in the Bay Area, because fall and winter rain helps roots get established.

But with fall comes inclement weather, and in windy parts of the Bay Area, that means some young trees will inevitably need to be staked.

We recommend anchor staking for young trees. (See our staff for Tree Planting handouts and other technical information).

Gardeners will want to "anchor stake" to hold an otherwise upright tree in place until the roots can grow into the surrounding soil. If trees are not well anchored, wind and subsequent trunk movement can break the newly forming roots. This type of staking also protects the trunk from mower or pedestrian damage.

Sloat Garden Center has a range of staking and tying options for general all purpose garden needs. We carry jute, twine and



Twist tie & Twine



Left: Reusable interlocking tree tie. Adjustable to several lengths.



Right: Reusable buckle tree tie. Strong and adjustable to many lengths.

These two ties are strong, broad, flexible and won't chafe the tree. The method shown above is called anchor staking – it is the correct method of attaching a stake to a tree, utilizing a flexible, broad material that will not chafe or girdle the young trunk.

plastic coated wire to hold up a dahlia, ties that are perfect for thin vines or peas, strong tree ties and

velcro and foam covered wire for more delicate operations and ease of use.

Spotlight: E.B. Stone soils & fertilizers

In 1916, E.B. Stone created a fertilizer that made his fruit crops the talk of other San Jose farmers. In time, he created more fertilizers as well as soil conditioners for flowers, fruit trees and many varieties of plant material. When he retired in 1979, he sold his family business to the Crandalls – another family dedicated to creating the best fertilizer and amendments.

Sloat customers often recognize E.B. Stone products by their artful packaging...that is, until they try them in the garden and recognize a great product. We asked E.B. Stone Sales & Marketing Manager Chris Totten and Territory Sales Manager Joe Currie about the business.



How does E.B. Stone go about creating new products?

Joe & Chris: We are constantly looking for new research, new ideas and new products that will make gardening easier, more fun, and more rewarding. One of the most important components in the process is keeping abreast of the latest research trends in agriculture and horticulture. Many of the 'advances' in organic fertilizers in the recent past are the result of researchers documenting the complex ecosystems beneath our feet.

Tell us about the incredible artwork on your products? Why did E.B. Stone choose to go with that style?

Joe & Chris: Anton Kimball was the designer. The artwork was all done as original opaque water color gouache paintings and included two completely custom designed typefaces. The alphabets and the paintings were all created by hand, using very traditional methods.

The guiding idea behind the choices was Anton's impression that everything in the garden space had "a really hard look." In contrast, Anton used subtle transitions and the very direct and saturated color that characterizes water color painting to create the E.B. Stone Organics look.

The compositions themselves are quite bold—they occupy almost half of the space of the front label and overlap the edge of the box which helps to reinforce the statement

of exuberance, success and achievement. The execution of the artwork was intended to evoke the sense that the garden would grow with abandon—almost wildly.

Does E.B. Stone have a mission?

Joe & Chris: First, to provide top quality products and information to help home gardeners have success in their gardens. Secondly, to support independently owned nurseries and hardware stores. E.B. Stone is the only garden supply company that has consistently focused all of its attention on independent, local businesses and is one of the few companies serving the lawn and garden world today that does not also serve the world of 'big-box, mega retailers.' We built our business serving 'mom and pop' independents and their customers.

Is there a philosophy behind E.B. Stone's decision to produce organic products?

Joe & Chris: Organic products have been part of our line up from the beginning. Six years ago, we introduced the E.B. Stone Organics line. This new product line was inspired by listening to our customers. There has been a growing demand, especially here in the Bay Area, for organic garden products that are safe for use around family, pets and wildlife.

The E.B. Stone Organics line was also inspired by looking at new developments in soil research. The new ability to add beneficial fungi spores and soil bacteria, along with

humic acids, to organic nutrient sources not only helped us produce a safe, environmentally friendly fertilizer, but also to get incredible plant performance. Anyone who has used E.B. Stone Sure Start knows the results, and we felt that our new line of products set

a whole new standard in the category when they were introduced. We remain committed to raising the bar as we develop new products.

Tell us about your recent warehouse fire and the new warehouse.

Joe & Chris: On September 22nd 2006, a devastating fire swept through our facility in Suisun, CA, destroying everything in its path. Three of our buildings were left in smoldering heaps of twisted metal—our entire production facility, warehouse and offices. It was a total loss with only a couple pieces of equipment left salvageable.

As a result of an outpouring of support from our customers and vendors, we have been steadily rebuilding our facility. Over the last several months all three structures have been rebuilt and new equipment delivered to the site. We are nearing the final phase of the project and our goal is to be 'home again' in our own facility in the immediate future.

Why are E.B. Stone products a great feature of Sloat's product line?

Joe & Chris: Both Sloat Garden Centers and E.B. Stone embody a commitment to providing local gardeners with the finest quality products and plants for their gardens. We are both family owned, local companies dedicated to providing excellent products, extensive knowledge and great service to home gardeners.

Fresh cut Christmas trees arrive at Sloat locations on Thanksgiving weekend!

Holiday Decorating Preview 2007-2008

The holidays are truly just around the corner and so to get you in the swing of things, we present Sloat Garden Center's 2007-08 holiday picks!

Back by popular demand is our selection of high-quality, permanent trees! Last year we received incredible feedback from customers on the quality of these trees - they look lush and beautiful, but are also practical.

Winward Silks uses patented Permalit light technology along with Soft Tip construction so the lights on their trees won't burn out as quickly. And the trees stay lit even if multiple lights burn out. Additionally, Permalit's cooler burning light bulbs are safer for children, and all Winward Christmas trees are easy to set up and flame retardant.

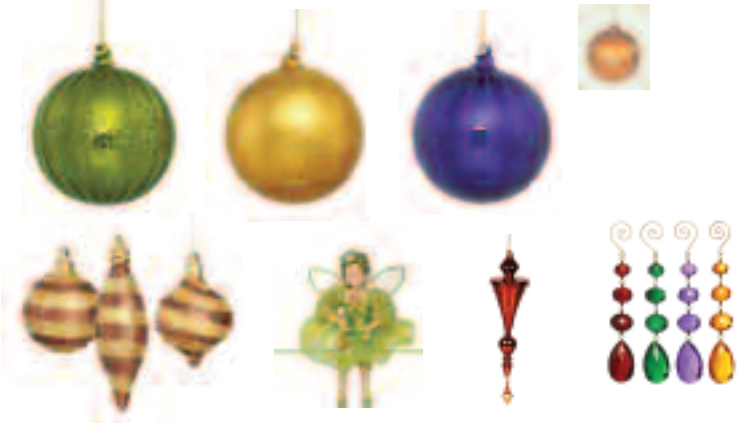


Winward Silks trees are:

- Beautiful, with a natural, multi-toned color.
- Crush resistant for years of appreciation.
- Built with heavy gauge branches for shaping & hanging strength.
- Built with strong hinged branches for fast and easy setup.
- Produced using Permalit light technology.
- Created with evenly distributed light-spacing for optimum illumination.
- Built to avoid unsightly wires.
- Stable, with a fully welded stand & protective powder coated finish.
- Sold with a 10 year warranty, including the lights.

Colorful ornaments for every tree

So many beautiful ornaments to choose from. This year we present a selection of rich, shiny colors for tree trimming. Take a look!



These exquisite and easy-to-care for permanent trees will be in most Sloat locations in early November. See www.sloatgardens.com for details!



Gorgeous wreaths!

This year we will once again offer the freshest wreaths in the Bay Area. All wreaths are expected to be available Thanksgiving weekend, but check www.sloatgardens.com first for the latest in availability.

To view our full ornament selection, visit the Sloat Boulevard, Kentfield, Mill Valley (E. Blithedale) and Danville locations.

Keep an eye out for a special Holiday Tree Trimming offer from Sloat - starting the first week of December!

Our Mill Valley teams!



E. Blithedale team: Graham, Leo, Sue (assistant manager) and Chuck
Miller Avenue team: (top to bottom) Shawn, Kevin, Michael (manager), Matt, Karen

If you've shopped Sloat Garden Center's two Mill Valley locations you've probably been assisted by Manager Michael Gravel and his teams. Together they run the busy Mill Valley store on East Blithedale and the slower-paced nursery on Miller Avenue. We asked Michael a few questions about the locations.

How are the two stores you manage different in terms of available plants, customer base and feel?

Michael: They both serve Mill Valley yards, so there's a lot of similar material. But each store has its own plant buyers so the exact mix and colors change and vary from store to store. The Blithedale location is very visible - for new people who move to Mill Valley, it's very easy to find. The Miller Avenue store is shopped by gardeners who appreciate the slower pace and also by long term Mill Valley residents who remember it as the old Eggers Nursery.

In terms of feel, the Blithedale store is physically smaller and needs to be organized to fit more material into a smaller space. It's more linear - and the product mix is constantly changing, so for the customer who shops

there on a regular basis, there's always something new and exciting to see.

The Miller Avenue location is a little more free-form and flowing. It's set back from the street, so it's quieter, peaceful and relaxing for those who like to wander around and enjoy the beauty...as well as do their shopping.

Is it helpful to have the Sloat garden design department based in the same building as the Miller Avenue store?

Michael: Yes! Sloat designers can bring customers through and show them examples of plants and also it allows the designers to see what's available when they're doing their designs. We learn about gardening trends from them, in terms of garden styles and garden & outdoor living accessories.

Is there a particular type of gardening or plant that you most enjoy working with?

Michael: I particularly like Mediterranean gardens because we are in a Mediterranean climate and those plants do well here without excessive amounts of water and care. It makes for an easy-care garden that's still beautiful. Right now I especially love New Zealand Flax. They're very architectural and come in a rainbow of colors!

Want to save paper and earn 200 Gardener's Reward points in the process? Visit our website to sign up to receive your copy of the Gardener's Notebook Newsletter by email instead of postal mail. It's free and comes with the option of a subscription to our monthly specials e-newsletter!

www.sloatgardens.com/switchtoemail



SLOAT SEMINARS

Attendance is limited. Please call ahead to the seminar location to reserve a seat.

Seminar fee is \$5.

(Gardener's Reward Program members are free.)

Wreath Making

Dawn Smith demonstrates how easy it is to create holiday decorations using some of the bounty from your own back yard.

Oct. 17—S.F. (Sloat Blvd.) Wed., 6:30 pm

Oct. 21—Kentfield, Sun., 10 am

Oct. 28—Mill Valley (Miller Ave.) Sun., 10 am

Nov. 4—San Bruno, Sun., 11 am

Elegant Entrances for the Holidays

Mary Te Selle, of Quite Contrary Gardening, discusses use of color, texture and form to create lively containers for your holidays!

Oct. 20—Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sat., 10 am

Oct. 27—Kentfield, Sat., 10 am

Nov. 10—San Rafael, Sat., 10 am

Vermicomposting Magic!

Lynn Adams, Master Composter, shows how to reduce your garbage bill with a worm bin and turn kitchen waste into a resource that helps the earth.

Oct. 20—San Bruno, Sat., 10 am

Nov. 7—S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 pm

Build A Scarecrow

Bring some old clothes for the body and make the best scarecrow on your block. Please call a 'head' to reserve.

\$5 Material fee includes head, paint, stuffing.

Oct. 20—Danville, Sat., 10 am

Pumpkin Painting

Create your own scary pumpkin face with the funny scary staff.

\$5 Material fee includes innocent pumpkin.

Please call ahead to reserve yours.

Oct. 21—San Rafael, Sun., 10 am

—Kentfield, Sun., 12:30pm

Oct. 24—S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 6:30 pm

Oct. 27—Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sat., 10 am

—Danville, Sat., 10 am

Oct. 28—San Bruno, Sun., 11 am

Innovative Gift Baskets

Julie Baldwin shows fun, colorful ways to create a reusable gift basket

(and reduce the amount of giftwrap thrown away).

Nov. 11—Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sun., 11 am

—Kentfield, Sun., 1:30 pm

Nov. 14—S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 pm

Dress up Your Doorway!

Linda Alexander and Cindy Bonilla have some great ideas for decorating your entrance for the holidays.

Nov. 10—Danville, Sat., 10 am

Nov. 28—S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 pm





fall cele

Fall indoor color: Bromeliads are so easy to grow



Guzmania hybrid

Bromeliads are a truly exotic looking plant that will really impress your friends...and they are a snap to grow!

Bromeliads will thrive in a wide range

of light conditions (including low light). Place them near windows, but without direct exposure to the sun. They enjoy humidity and love regular misting.

Many bromeliads will tolerate long periods without water, however they should be watered when their potting soil dries at the surface - usually once a week.

Keep the soil moist to keep the plant from tipping over - bromeliads get watered in the "funnel" of the plant, so replenish when empty.

Try one of these colorful houseplants this fall and winter!

Want a great fall flower? Plant Camellia sasanqua!

There are few more stunning fall and winter color displays than that of *Camellia sasanqua* in bloom. Flowering earlier than *Camellia japonica*, this variety makes a wonderful low growing hedge, terrific container plant, and a useful ground cover.

Sasanquas have mature heights that range from about 4 to 15 feet. They can be shaped easily (best in early spring), which allows you to make topiaries and to prune them into specimen plants.

The sasanquas's needs are similar to rhododendrons and azaleas - they prefer a rich organic and acidic growing medium and filtered light.

The good news for Bay Area gardeners is that they will also grow in full sun provided you give them adequate moisture. Once established they are quite drought tolerant. You'll also discover that camellias are practically pest free!



Camellia sasanqua

Feed camellias with an acid fertilizer such as E.B. Stone Organic Azalea, Camellia and Gardenia Food.

Keep roots cool with a thick layer of mulch and maintain regular watering in order to promote nutrient uptake.

Camellia tip: For larger, more successful blooms, pinch out at least every other bud that forms on branch tips to concentrate the plant's energy into opening the remaining buds.

Send us a Postcard from the Patch!

As part of our annual October customer appreciation weekend, Sloat Garden Center will hold a Pumpkin Patch Giveaway! Enter at any location to win Sloat Garden Center gift cards & free pumpkins!

Grand prize: 10 customers will each win a \$50 gift card
First prize: 100 customers will each win a free pumpkin

Enter in one of 2 ways between October 1st and October 15th:

1. Watch your mail for a coupon entry form during the first week of October. Fill it out and bring it in to any of our 10 locations.
2. Fill out a postcard from the patch entry card at any of our 10 locations.



SAVE THE DATE!

The Annual Fall Customer Appreciation Event at Sloat Garden Center

OCTOBER 12TH – OCTOBER 14TH

Enjoy fantastic specials and savings on plants, pottery and gardening products for Gardener's Reward Members!

Fall decor for the porch!

This fall our pumpkin patch is stocked with a great selection of:

- Howden carving pumpkins
- Cinderella Red pumpkins
- Assorted gourds
- Miniature pumpkins
- White, Blue & Brown pumpkins



Postcards from the Patch



Postcards from the Patch



Postcards from the Patch

See Sloat locations for details

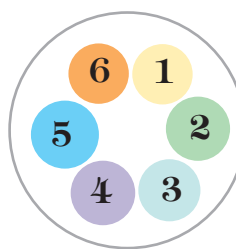
beration!



Welcome autumn with this striking container recipe



Let your doorways and walkways tell the story of autumn with this warm container recipe. No time to make it yourself? Stop by any Sloat Garden Center and we can pot it up for you, or select from one of our pre-designed autumn container creations!



- (1) *Carex testacea*
- (2) *Artemesia 'Powis Castle'*
- (3) *Aster nova benglii*
- (4) *Oxalis 'Vulcanicola'*
- (5) *Sedum spathyphyllum*
- (6) *Chrysanthemum*, garden mum

Fall planning for spring?

It's not even Thanksgiving and we're already talking about spring? No, it's not a cruel way to test your planning abilities. This fall we're suggesting gardeners take advantage of the cool weather, warm soil and upcoming rains to get a head start on spring planting.

With the copious amounts of fall and winter rainfall we receive in the Bay Area, plants have an easier time getting established when they're planted now, versus the spring. Gardening this way will help your water bill, and utilizing free rain won't tax the water supply. Plus, if you go away on vacation, you won't need a neighbor to water for you – mother nature will be on the task!

Shrubs and trees. If you're thinking about planting new trees and shrubs in the spring, consider doing so this fall. Planting bareroot trees and shrubs now will create well-established roots that make a much stronger, vigorous plant in the spring. Bareroot maples, magnolias and dogwoods will arrive in our stores by November 1st and camellias will arrive by mid-October.

Sweet peas. Plant sweet pea seeds now for early spring flowering. Sweet peas do best when they can get their roots established and start growth when it's still cool.

Poppies. Like sweet peas, poppies decline at the first sign of heat. Get them planted now so that they'll take off as soon as the ground warms.

Spring flowering bulbs. You'll be thrilled with the explosion of spring color by planning now and planting tulips, muscari, daffodils, iris and freesia.

Biennial and perennials. Biennials and perennials are best started in the fall. At all Sloat Garden Center locations are jumbo packs, which are an economical way to go. Plant foxglove, canterbury bells, larkspur and delphinium.

Fantastic Fall Color



As summer ends, we look forward to the wonderful changes autumn brings. It's a tremendous time to fill your garden with the rich, bold colors of fall flowers.



There are a wide variety of plants you can place in the ground or containers to brighten your backyard and home during the next few months.



Chrysanthemums are a favorite. What makes this hardy plant so popular are its brightly colored shades of red, yellow, purple, pink and white, and its versatility. "Mums" perform well in borders and containers and make perfect cut flowers.



Violas and pansies are great for providing mass color in beds, planter boxes and containers. These multi-hued plants also serve as a great ground cover for spring bulbs.

Try planting cyclamen and be rewarded with "shooting star" flowers of white, pink and red for the holidays and well beyond.

Another selection for fall is flowering cabbage & kale. These two will really brighten up your yard! Then, finish your garden with the rich foliage of coleus!