

Rosalind Reed's List of Most Useful Foliage Plants

Here are some of my favorite foliage plants. These plants are easy to grow and require minimal maintenance. (A "T" indicates this plant might be tender, especially if grown in Zone 5A or colder, so give it a protected site.) I usually select non-flowering annuals and herbs for their foliage color—I rarely look for cultivar names.

Red foliage: Barberries, including 'Rosy Glow', some Japanese maples (T), some weigelas, *Heuchera micrantha* 'Palace Purple', some astilbes such as 'Fanal' or 'Sprite'. Annuals: red fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum'), coleus, and caladiums.

Yellow foliage: I like many yellow-hued garden conifers, especially yellow cultivars of *Chamaecyparis pisifera*, *Picea pungens* 'Walnut Glen' and *Pinus mugo* 'Aurea'. Other great foliage "yellows" are: *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Strictus', *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' (T), some hostas ('Sum and Substance', 'August Moon'), variegated yucca, *Alchemilla mollis* (because the flowers last so long, although the foliage rightly belongs in the blue category). Annuals: variegated sage, ipomoea 'Margarita', canna 'Praetoria', *Helichrysum petiolare* 'Limelight', and coleus.

Blue foliage: Many dwarf conifers, hypericum, baptisia, *Macleaya cordata*, many blue hosta, *Festuca glauca* 'Elijah Blue', *Molinia caerulea* cultivars, all iris, yucca, culinary sage, Japanese painted fern (*Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum'), sedum 'Autumn Joy' ('Herbstfreude'), gypsophylia.

Purple foliage: *Prunus x cistena*, Rhododendron 'PJM' and others, *Penstemon digitalis* 'Husker Red', *Ajuga reptans* 'Bronze Beauty' and 'Catlin's Giant', sedum 'Vera Jameson', variegated sage. Annuals: ipomoea 'Blackie', canna 'Wyoming', some dahlias, bronze fennel, basil 'Purple Ruffles', coleus.

Silver/white foliage: Caryopteris (T), variegated kerria, most buddleias, *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Variegatus', stachys, pulmonarias, perovskia, *Physostegia virginiana* 'Variegata', all artemisias (be sure to en-cage the spreaders), some hostas, *Cerastium tomentosum*, *Ajuga reptans* 'Burgundy Glow', *Lamium maculatum* 'White Nancy', lavender (T), Annuals: helichrysum, caladiums.

TWG Editor: For recommended sources, please consult weedpatch.com's Plant Catalog.

ALTERNATIVES TO COMMON PLANTS

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'Crimson King' Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides* 'Crimson King'): Try *Acer griseum* (paperbark maple); *Acer palmatum* var. *atropurpureum* (bloodleaf Japanese maple).

Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*): Try *Acer x freemanii* 'Armstrong', 'Autumn Fantasy' or 'Celebration'; *Tilia tomentosa* (silver linden).

Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*): Try *Pyrus salicifolia* 'Silver Frost'.

Privet (*Ligustrum*): Try *Syringa microphylla* (littleleaf lilac); *Aronia arbutifolia* (red chokeberry); *Itea virginica* 'Henry's Garnet' (Virginia sweetspire).

Golden Vicary privet (*Ligustrum x vicaryi*): Try *Forsythia x intermedia* 'Rebel'; *Spirea japonica* 'Gold Mound'; or *Juniperus chinensis* 'Saybrook Gold'.

Tatarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*): Try *Aesculus parviflora* (bottlebrush buckeye); *Clethra alnifolia* 'Pink Spires' or 'Ruby Spice' (summersweet clethras); *Weigela* 'Red Prince'.

Purpleleaf sand cherry (*Prunus x cistena*): Try *Prunus virginiana* 'Shubert'; *Cotinus cogggria* 'Velvet Cloak' (smoke tree).

Pin oak (*Quercus palustris*): Try *Quercus coccinea* (scarlet oak); *Quercus lyrata* (overcup oak); *Quercus rubra* (northern red oak); *Quercus shumardii* (Schumard oak).

Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*): Try *Pinus cembra* (Swiss stone pine); *Pinus strobiformis* (Southwestern white pine); *Pinus parviflora* (Japanese white pine); *Pinus flexilis* (limber pine).

Austrian pine (*Pinus nigra*): Try *Pinus koraiensis* (Korean pine); *Pinus ponderosa*; *Pinus peuce* (Macedonian pine).