

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

THE BUILDING OF THE NEW "AUTUMN GARDEN" AT

CRAIG BERGMANN'S COUNTRY GARDEN

by James Grigsby

Perennial asters were favored by English gardener, Gertrude Jekyll. No wonder. Asters, or, as Mrs. Jekyll called them, 'Michaelmas Daisies', are wonderful additions to the garden. Here in the Midwest, they are an underused family of plants: seemingly, for no good reason. Asters are hardy, reliable, come in a multitude of sizes and a wide range of colors, from white to pink, light blue to purple; and mauve to fuchsia. They provide a welcome respite from the ubiquitous yellows, golds and rusts of mums.

It was this large class of plants which stimulated us to create a garden which would come into peak color during the months of August, September, and October. While this new garden was to emphasize fall color, we determined that it also have interest throughout the gardening season. We also wished to add a demonstration garden with a very different personality from the other four gardens already in place at *Craig Bergmann's Country Garden*.

A one-quarter acre of turf located at the garden center entry seemed a good location for the autumn garden. The soil is heavy (but nutritious) clay and receives full sun. The designing began 2 years ago and was coordinated by our senior designer, Charles Fischer, ASLA. Last summer we broke ground: the soil was amended, beds were contoured, paths were paved with gravel and an irrigation system was installed.

Approximately 70% of the woody and herbaceous plants were installed by late

August, 1997. Mature woody plants were selected to give the garden an established appearance. Large **Thuja occidentalis** (10' x 14'), espaliered **Juniperus chinensis**, **Taxus x media**, **Aesculus parviflora**, **Aronia arbutifolia**, **Cornus sericea**, **Cotinus coggygria**, **Hydrangea arborescens** and **Hydrangea paniculata**, **Rhus aromatica**, **Sambucus cultivars**, **Acer triflorum**, and **Viburnum opulus** are some of the over 130 trees and shrubs incorporated into the design.

Rustic cedar fencing and a 12' bridge over a "pond" of **Carex glauca** and a giant lily sculpture imported from California comprise the "bones" of the garden. This past July, the remaining herbaceous plants were added. The 1,400 plants include 17 varieties of **Asters**, **Amsonia**, **Anenome**, **Cerastostigma**, **Epimedium**, perennial **Geranium**, **Perovskia**, **Polygonum**, **Rudbeckia**, **Sedum**, **Silphium**,

Verbascum, **Rose**, vines, and ten varieties of perennial grasses.

It has been said that "gardeners dream bigger dreams than emperors." Our big dream of an Autumn Garden has been realized. We believe you will be impressed at how the garden has "filled in" in one year. Isn't it gratifying when plants perform beyond our expectations? We hope gardeners will share in our excitement over this new garden. But please, leave your trowels at home!



James Grigsby co-owns *Craig Bergmann's Country Garden*, located at 700 Kenosha Road in Winthrop Harbor, IL. The garden center is open April-October. Please call (847) 746-0311 for more information. For the landscape design office of Craig Bergmann and James Grigsby, call (847) 251-8355.

The Autumn Garden,

established 1998,
at

Craig Bergmann's Country Garden,
Winthrop Harbor, Illinois

(Photo by Linda Oyama Bryan, Wilmette, IL)

