

Flowering Plants for the August Garden

By Kathleen Cue, Nebraska Extension Horticulture Educator

When it comes to August's garden, many gardeners, plant enthusiasts and landscapers are willing to skip the month entirely because of the challenge posed by the seemingly few plants that provide interest during August. I'd like to challenge that notion, mainly because August is a perfectly fine month of frost-free weather and why not make good use of it? Whether your goal is to spruce up a drab corner or benefit pollinators, look to some lesser-known flowering plants to brighten your August garden.

Native plants are excellent contributors to the August garden. The spiked gayfeather, *Liatris spicata*, is found in many gardens but this genus has way more to offer. *Liatris microcephala*, tiny-headed liatris, packs the purple flowers onto stems just 18 inches tall. *Liatris pycnostachya* 'Eureka', button snakeroot, is a whopping 5 foot tall! Turtlehead, *Chelone lyonii*, is not your typical daisy-type native flower. Flowers of pink or white appear on plants adapted to shade/part shade conditions. Helen's flower, *Helenium* spp., often goes by the unfair name sneezeweed because it's not a weed and it doesn't make one sneeze. Cultivars range from tall to short, primarily in the red-orange-yellow area of the spectrum.

Daylilies, *Hemerocallis*, contribute a large number of varieties that bloom in August. 'Challenger' produces medium red flowers on 4 foot tall stems. This variety was introduced into the nursery trade in 1949, proving that a plant doesn't have to be a new introduction to be good. Other daylilies that bloom in August include, 'Happy Returns', 'Jen Melon', 'Jersey Spider', 'Mighty Chestnut' and 'Yuma'.

Patrinia scabiosifolia sports tiny sulfur-yellow flowers in grand clusters that make it a showy addition for August. If it's pollinators you're looking to attract, then plant the biennial Korean angelica, *Angelica gigas*. Wine-purple flowers appear on plants 2-4 feet tall. *Clematis heracleifolia*, tube clematis, is unlike any other clematis you've grown, with blue-purple tubular flowers on a 3 foot tall shrub. Panicked hydrangea, *Hydrangea paniculata*, has numerous cultivars of show-stopping flowers including 'Tardiva' and 'Grandiflora'.

The August garden need not be drab. More about these plants and many others for the August garden may be found in this ISU Extension publication written by yours truly:

<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/Flowering-Plants-for-the-Late-Summer-Garden> .