

September Flower Power

By Kathleen Cue, Nebraska Extension Horticulture Educator in Dodge County

September doesn't have to be about chrysanthemums and asters alone. There is a plethora of other, lesser-known, counterparts that can add flower power to the late season garden.

Turtlehead, *Chelone lyonii*, has light pink to dark pink flowers that resemble, you guessed it, a turtle's head. Serrate leaves are pointed, shiny and dark green. People are surprised to hear it is a native plant because the flowers are so very different from the daisy-type flowers prevalent now. Plant turtlehead in a location where it receives shade in the afternoon and has soil that stays evenly moist.

Forget about what you know about the vining clematis, and consider planting one of the bush clematis instead. One of the stars of this group is the tube clematis, *Clematis heracleifolia*. Dark purple flowers with recurved petals are produced prolifically on this 3 foot tall plant. Plant the tube clematis in a location that receives 4 or more hours of direct sunlight daily.

Blue mist flower, *Conoclinium coelestinum*, is another unconventional native. Each flower is a small puff of lavender. With each flower held with others in umbels, the effect is a mist of lavender covering the plant. Blue mist flower does colonize an area through underground structures called rhizomes, so give it room to spread. Plants do well in a location of full to part sun and a soil that is evenly moist.

Daylilies, *Hemerocallis* spp., feature early, mid and late blooming cultivars for a variety of flower colors and forms to plug vacant spots throughout the growing season. One of the oldest of the late blooming cultivars is 'Autumn Minaret'. Introduced into the flower trade in 1951, 'Autumn Minaret' has golden orange flowers with a red blush. Flower stalks reach 5 feet and more in height. Daylilies do best in locations receiving 6 or more hours of sunlight daily. While daylilies are drought tolerant, flowering is best when they receive an inch of water each week.

Sedum, *Hylotelephium* spp., has been around for a long time. 'Autumn Joy' is appreciated for its toughness and late flower. So if you like this plant, consider other 15-inch tall sedums like 'Neon' or 'Matrona'. 'Neon' has intense purplish-pink flowers and green foliage, while 'Matrona' features pink flowers contrasting with purplish stems. All sedums are tough as nails, withstanding the hottest conditions and driest soils.

More information about late flowering plants may be found here:

<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/13124> .

Upcoming Classes:

Emerald Ash Borer—What Finding It in the Area Means for Ash Tree Owners, September 24, 6:00 pm, Dodge County Extension, 1206 West 23rd St. Fremont. Workshop is free and open to the public.

Creating Pollinator Habitat Workshop, September 27, 5:30 pm, Dodge County Extension, 1206 West 23rd St. Fremont. Learn how to help pollinators and the plants that benefit them. Class cost \$15; \$25 to make a bee hotel to take home. Questions or to register, contact Kathleen Cue at kcue2@unl.edu or 402 727-2775.









