



What's Blooming in October

By Rebecca Kelly

October is not exactly top-of-mind as being a knock-out month for blooms in the garden, but on a visit to the Montreal Botanical Gardens (MBG) a few years ago, David and I were indeed knocked out by the many plants that were blooming in profusion! It was pretty nippy - single digit temperatures prevailed - and we were bundled up in hat, gloves and snugly coats, but the cold didn't stop the flowers.

Here is a selection to inspire any gardener:



Aconitum Carmichaelii

Monkshood (*Aconitum*) species are famous for their late blooming periods. They go well into late October, and their intense colour and unique appearance make them welcome additions to the garden. Site next to Hydrangea, for a great combination in colours. Aconitum is famously poisonous. In fact, some advise wearing gloves when handling to avoid its effects. This didn't stop the deer from having a good feed of ours though! We were astounded to see how much of our Monkshood the deer had eaten. However, it wasn't completely eaten to the ground, so perhaps the deer had second thoughts after a few mouthfuls.

Asters are common blooming in the wild throughout the province, and we have many, many forms. They smell wonderful and they are a magnet for bees. Of course, there were many cultivars blooming at the MBG, but these in particular caught our eye:

The branches of this tiny white Aster formed a dense hard mat. It is very floriferous.



Symphyotrichum ericoides 'Snowflurry'



New England Aster

This is a huge bunch of asters. The people walking behind them gives you some idea of their size.



Japanese Anenomes are the mainstays of the late fall garden. They really come into their own in October. Some forms are a bit invasive and many self-seed, but others are perfectly behaved and have delightful, delicate flowers.

From the vegetable garden, take a look at these beauties:



Anemone hupehensis 'Splendins'

Have you ever eaten an artichoke? Perhaps marinated in oil and vinegar. The flower buds are a delicious treat, but if you forget to pick them, no worries, the flowers are also sensational.

This is Amaranth, (Amaranthus caudatus) a very important grain in some parts of the world. It's also very attractive and many hybrids have been cultivated for use as annuals in the garden.



Rosemary is not hardy in our zone, but you can grow it in a pot and bring it in when winter comes.

This is a rosemary bush to aspire to.

You can see the scale of this marvelous herb by the bench that is next to it. What this picture doesn't show is that this is but one pot of four. They must use a forklift to get this inside for the winter! And look at the blooms all over it!



And then there are the roses...

Created in 1987 to mark the Olympic games, the rose garden is 2.5 hectares with 100 beds and 10,000 roses of over 1,000 different varieties. Although it was October, there were still many bushes in bloom. The bushes which had finished for the year had already been pruned back ready for winter, but the ones which were still blooming were not yet cut back and continued to delight with their displays.



I didn't get the names of the roses as I was far too excited just to see them.



And finally, I couldn't resist these wonderful grasses shown at their height of gloriousness. I hope our grasses decide to bloom for us, and grace us with their beautiful seed heads.



In front we have Calamagrostis and behind we have Miscanthus Sinensis. I'm not sure of the varieties, but they are all sensational, and to be quite honest, it's hard to choose between them.
