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Matthaei sets fall garden sale

The fall season is upon us and with it comes a perfect opportunity to turn your gardens into a sanctuary for wildlife by planting trees, shrubs, perennials and spring flowering bulbs. A fine selection of these plants will be offered at the Friends of the U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens Fall Gardener's Sale 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 13-14.

An early bird members night will be held 3-7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 12.

Individuals wishing to beat the crowds and receive first selection of plants may join the Friends of the Botanical Gardens Friday evenings and receive 10 percent off of their purchase. Now in its eighth year, this popular fund-raiser is the final garden event before winter's dormancy forces us to put away our trowels and pruners.

Trees and shrubs planted around the yard offer shelter and shade to birds and other wildlife as well as provide year-round textures and color for the homeowner. Among the plants offered at this year's sale will be a selection of dwarf conifers as well as flowering shrubs such as lilac, spiraea, aesculus, hydrangea, buddleia, viburnum, clematis and weigela to name just a few. Additional varieties of woody plants include cotinus (smoke tree), fagus tricolor (tricolor beech), ilex (holly) and rhus (sumac and cut-leaf sumac).

For those wishing to designate a portion of the yard to the "New American" style of landscaping, ornamental grasses are the way to go. They provide drifts of color, texture and interest during the drab winter months. Included will be unique varieties of briza (quaking grass), calamagrostis (feather reed grass), carex (sedge), helictotrichon (blue oat grass), miscanthus (porcupine grass), molina (purple moor grass), pennisetum (dwarf fountain grass) as well as little and big bluestem grass.

This year, the sale will offer an expanded selection of bare-root woodland flowers including trillium, bloodroot, solomons seal, hepaticum jack-in-the-pulpit, may apple, wild ginger, pink lady, slipper orchid, spring beauty, trout lily, baneberry and more! Along with daylilies and hosta, the sale will again offer a great selection of flowering bulbs to brighten your garden in the spring. Not only will flowers create a scene pleasing to the human eye, but certain colors attract the attention of winged guests. Orange and purple flowers are irresistible to butterflies, red brings hummingbirds and white encourages moths and other nocturnal flying insects to visit your garden.

The sale has plenty of free parking. Admission is free. The sale is at the UM Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 North Dixboro Road in Ann Arbor.

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