

# Gail's Gardens

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## Fall Favorites

This is the time of year when our summer flowers are beginning to fade and a new set of fall-bloomers is needed to give a "punch" of color and interest to the garden. I'd like to share a few of my favorite fall bloomers with you today.

Last year I planted three evergreen miscanthus (*Miscanthus transmorriensis*) on a sunny hillside with Jerusalem sage, lavender, and ceanothus. They are already 3 feet across with the flowering spikes up to 5 feet tall: so graceful in the breeze. I enjoy watching them every morning and evening from my kitchen window. Hardy to -10 degrees, and drought tolerant once established, these beauties are evergreen. If you plant this variety, be sure to give it room to grow: I have seen one plant grow 6 feet across!

Another new grass which I added to my garden last year is Giant Feather Grass (*Stipa gigantea*): planted on a low berm with *Ceanothus* 'Yankee Point' and *Correa* 'Dusky Bells', it provides a airy screening effect without blocking the view toward the mountains. Its basal clump is evergreen and only knee-high, but its longlasting golden seed stalks are 6' tall and are still gorgeous after a full summer's show. I expect they will continue looking good until the rains come.

Our California native Autumn sage (*Salvia greggii*) is in its full glory in fall with bright green leaves and brilliant red flowers: I love to use it as a filler in flower bouquets. I found mine on the roadside and have grown many plants from that original cutting. It is absolutely tough, adaptable to wet or dry ground and sand or clay soil. Be sure to cut this salvia back hard in the late winter/early spring to keep it full and avoid that 'leggy' look.

Don't let your roses fade just because it's autumn: join me for a free class at Bassignani's Nursery on Saturday, Sept. 26 at 10:30 am to learn how to keep them blooming happily until winter.

Asters are an old standard for the cottage garden and I have had great success with the variety 'Monch' (*Aster x frikartii* 'Monch'). This



herbaceous perennial (dies back to the roots in winter) loves a position on the edge of my lawn where it gets a fair amount of water, and spreads slowly to form a mass of shiny green foliage in the spring, followed by a long-lasting fall display of small blue daisy-like flowers. It is easy to spread around the garden by digging some of the fleshy roots in the spring, so I now have it happily growing in three different areas where it mingles with Peruvian lily (*Alstroemeria*), iris, and roses. 'Monch' is very resistant to powdery mildew, which is a problem for many other asters.

As the weather cools down and the rains come, we move into the best planting time in Sonoma County: if you need advice on designing your garden for easy care and maximum beauty, give me a call now at 829-2455 for a garden consultation or a complete design. Prices are very reasonable!

I have inherited a new green house



and am hoping to grow all kinds of good salad greens and veggies this fall season: I hope you are planning for your fall garden too. Looking forward to next year's spring garden? This is the season to plant your Sweet Peas: Claudia Owens will share all the tricks of the English gardeners for outstanding sweet peas at 10:30 am on Saturday Oct. 10th at Bassignani's Nursery in Sebastopol.

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#### Three convenient Sonoma County locations to serve you

Cotati • 7171 Stony Point Rd. • 795-1775 • Monday-Friday 7:00-4:30, Saturday 8:00-12:00  
Sonoma • 4202 Stage Gulch Rd. • 996-3400 • Monday-Friday 7:00-4:30, Saturday by appt. only  
Santa Rosa • 2759 Llano Rd. • 575-7275 • Monday-Saturday 8:00-5:00, Recycling 8:00-4:00

## GARDENING

**Sept 18-20 ~ The Late Show Gardens ~** Celebrate design while addressing climate change, drought, & sustainable practices. Adults \$10-\$20, Under-6 Free. Proceeds benefit the Garden Conservancy. 9:30-5:30 at Cornerstone Sonoma, 23570 Highway 121, Sonoma ~ 877-504-5283 ~ [www.thelateshowgardens.org](http://www.thelateshowgardens.org)

**Sept 19 ~ The Land, the Farmer, the Chef, & the Food ~** Follow organic farmer Ken Orchard on a tour of the historic Laufenburg Ranch. Bring a folding chair, & enjoy wine & appetizers made from the farm's bounty. \$15. 4:00-6:30pm in Knights Valley, east of Healdsburg ~ RSVP: 707-526-6930 ~ [www.sonomalandtrust.org](http://www.sonomalandtrust.org)

**Sept 19, Oct 3 ~ Plant Sale ~** Perennials & Unusuals for \$1-\$10! We accept plant containers for reuse. Rain does *not* cancel. 9:00-2:00 at Willowside School Nursery, 5285 Willowside Rd at Hall Rd, Santa Rosa ~ Jan, 707-569-4724 ~ [www.oakgroveunionschools.org](http://www.oakgroveunionschools.org)

**Gardening Classes ~** with Sonoma County Master Gardeners. Free. 10:30am-12:30pm at Harvest for the Hungry Garden, 1717 Yulupa Avenue Santa Rosa ~ 707-566-7937 ~ [www.harvestgarden.org](http://www.harvestgarden.org)

**Sept 26 ~ Great Herbs to Grow for Fall & Winter Gardens**

**Oct 10 ~ More Bees = More Food!**

**Sept 26 ~ Summer Rose Care ~** Bring your pruners to this *Free* gardening demonstration! Presented by Gail Fanning of Blue Hill Garden Design. 10:30 am at Bassignani's Nursery, 1841 Gravenstein Highway S, Sebastopol ~ 707-829-2455 ~ [www.bluehilldesign.shorturl.com](http://www.bluehilldesign.shorturl.com)

**Sept 26-27 ~ Open Farm ~** 10:00-5:00 at French Garden Farm, 11031 Cherry Ridge Road (between Grandview & Occidental Road), Sebastopol ~

**Sept 26-27 ~ Open House & Plant Sale ~** Tour the grounds, speak with Master Gardeners, take home a new plant! Apple cider & refreshments. 10:00-4:00 at Luther Burbank's Gold Ridge Experiment Farm, 7781 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol ~ 707-829-6711 ~ [www.wschsgarf.org](http://www.wschsgarf.org)

**Sept 27 ~ Open Gardens ~** Tour the gardens, view "Museum of Purse Atomizers," 'Perfume Launch' events at 10:00 & 2:00. Free. 10:00-5:00 at Russian River Rose Company, 1685 Magnolia Drive, Healdsburg ~ 707-433-7455 ~ [www.russian-river-rose.com](http://www.russian-river-rose.com)

**Sept 30 Deadline ~ Be a Master Gardener ~** Classes begin mid-January & run through mid-April in Rohnert Park & Shone Farm. Info: 707-565-2608 ~ [www.sonomamastergardeners.org](http://www.sonomamastergardeners.org)

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**Avoid surprises! Call before you go!**