

Shrubs, trees will have you seeing red with delight



Carla Keast

AROUND THE YARD

If you want some colour in your yard, but flowers aren't your thing, you're in luck. A few shrubs and trees have leaves that turn red in the middle of the season — a lovely source of colour without any flowery-ness. A bit of luck is the case though, because there aren't many, and they are not trouble-free.

They're an interesting group to watch. Most flower in early spring, either before, or at the same time as they put out their leaves. The leaves often start out green giving the impression they will simply blend into the background green, but they usually turn by early summer.

I had a young arborist ask me why designers use schubert chokecherry so much. Very simple — it's a small enough tree for most yards (eight metres high and six metres wide), a striking purple-red most of the summer, and low maintenance. Schuberts are susceptible to black

knot disease which is unsightly but rarely lethal. Affected limbs should be pruned out immediately.

Some of the rosyblooms are almost as vibrant in colour. Gladiator and Purple Spire have purple leaves while Kelsey is copper-green. Rosyblooms (six by two to five metres) put out dramatic floral displays in early spring, and produce ornamental fruit, which can make them high maintenance trees.

Cistena cherry is my favourite red leaved shrub. It's from the same family as the schubert, and shares its vibrant purple-red colour. It can grow as big as 1.75 by 1.75 metres but rarely does due to our harsh winters. It usually begins the spring looking leery, offers a few flowers, and then pulls itself together to put out a healthy, almost delicate leaf display. Give it full sun and shelter.

Barberries are known for their foliage colours. Concorde is a small shrub (0.5 by one metre) and is a striking purple. A bit less intense, Ruby Carousel is reddish-purple and larger (1.25 by 0.9 metres). Not to be outdone, Rose Glow (0.9 by 0.9 metres) has variegated purple and rose



Submitted photo

The Cistena cherry is a popular red shrub that starts off slow but will usually finish the growing season with a flourish.

leaves. Barberries prefer full sun and a somewhat sheltered location. Be careful of their barbs.

Ninebark are larger shrubs (1.75 by 1.75 metres), come in a range of purple-reds, and are quite undemanding. Diabolo is a very dark purple; Center Glow starts golden and turns purple; Coppertina starts copper and becomes

red. Give them full to partial sun.

If you like striking reds, one or two properly placed red-leaved trees or shrubs can't be beat.

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