

Perennials can finish with a real full flourish



Carla Keast

AROUND THE YARD

There's nothing subtle or understated about the late summer flowering perennials.

Apparently, if they have to wait all summer to flower, they're going big, bold, and dramatic. Their colours tend to be deep and saturated, a good match for the intense golden light at summer's end. And even better, many are fairly low maintenance.

For anyone in need of a drama queen, the Rocket Ligularia is your plant. It sends out brilliant golden yellow spikes of flowers that can reach heights of nearly two metres. Even without the flowers, it's a big plant at about a metre tall by a metre wide. And if that's not enough drama, its huge circular-shaped leaves get all pouty and droopy in late afternoon

sun, and then perk up again when the sun goes down. Ideally, locate it in a shady location where it will get morning light and moist soil.

Helenium is about a half a metre high and entirely nondescript before it explodes into vibrant yellow or orange-red blooms and doubles its size. The flowers look like tiny trimmed and reshaped daisies and are produced so profusely that it will sometimes need to be staked to keep it upright. It prefers full sun and average moisture.

A mass planting of Rudbeckia may be all you need for late summer flowers. At a height of about three-quarters of a metre, with bright gold oversized daisy-like flowers, this plant is striking. And it's got staying power. It holds up well through the first light fall frosts. It prefers full or partial sun and average soil moisture, although it is drought tolerant once established.

Blazing star (*Liatris*) is narrow and spike-like, and adds textural interest throughout the summer. But it really gets



Submitted photo

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interesting when it flowers. At a bit under half a metre tall, the top third of each spike fills with tiny flowers that give it an almost fluffy top. It could be art or extra-terrestrial, but either way, it's fabulous. Blazing star prefers full sun and average moisture.

Chrysanthemum is a popular fall flowering perennial. At just under half a

metre, it is a small no-nonsense plant that covers itself with large showy flowers which come in lots of colours. It will also weather the first couple of light frosts. It likes full or partial sun and average moisture.

After a long and thankfully hot summer, we may be worn out, but the flowers just keep coming. Thankfully,

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