



# Woody Plants with Showy Fall Color

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Each year when the temperatures start to decline and days get shorter, the magic of autumn changes the green leaves to a kaleidoscope of yellow, orange, red, purple and bronze. When selecting plants for landscaping, consider choosing plants that have not only showy flowers in spring or summer, but also colorful fall foliage. Listed below are some woody plants that have showy autumn color. This list is by no means comprehensive and there are many other species and cultivars worthy of use. Check with your local nursery or garden center for availability of specific species. Cold hardiness is based on the U.S.D.A. Cold Hardiness Zone map: [Zone 3a (cold hardy to –35 to –40°F), Zone 3b (cold hardy to –30 to –35°F), Zone 4a (cold hardy to –25 to –30°F), Zone 4b (cold hardy to –20 to –25°F), Zone 5a (cold hardy to –15 to –20°F), Zone 5b (cold hardy to –10 to –15°F)].

## Large to Medium-Sized Trees with Showy Fall Color (> 30' tall)

*Acer* × *freemanii*: Freeman maple, yellow, orange to red fall color, depends on cultivar, zone 3b  
*Acer miyabei*: Miyabe maple, late, yellow fall color, zone 4a  
*Acer nigrum*: black maple, yellow to orange fall color, zone 4a  
*Acer platanoides*: Norway maple, late, yellow to gold fall color, zone 4b  
*Acer rubrum*: red maple, yellow to bright red fall color, depends on cultivar, zone 3b  
*Acer saccharum*: sugar maple, yellow to bright orange-red fall color, zone 3a  
*Acer* ‘Warrenred’: Pacific Sunset® maple, late, yellow, orange to red fall color, zone 4b  
*Aesculus* × *arnoldiana* ‘Autumn Splendor’: Autumn Splendor buckeye, early, deep burgundy red fall color, zone 4a  
*Aesculus flava*: yellow buckeye, early, golden yellow to orange fall color, zone 4a  
*Aesculus* × *marylandica* ‘Homestead’: Homestead buckeye, early orange to red fall color, zone 4a  
*Betula alleghaniensis*: yellow birch, bright yellow fall color, zone 3b  
*Betula lenta*: sweet birch, cherry birch, bright yellow fall color, zone 4a  
*Betula papyrifera*: paper birch, canoe birch, yellow fall color, zone 2b  
*Betula populifolia* ‘Whitespire Senior’: Whitespire Senior gray birch, yellow fall color, zone 3b  
*Carya cordiformis*: bitternut hickory, yellowbud hickory, bright golden yellow fall color, zone 4b  
*Carya ovata*: shagbark hickory, bright yellow to yellow-brown fall color, zone 4b  
*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*: katsuratree, yellow to apricot fall color, brown leaves smell like cotton candy, zone 4b  
*Cladrastis kentukea*: American yellowwood, bright yellow to gold fall color, zone 4b

*Fagus grandifolia*: American beech, late, yellow to russet-brown fall color, zone 4a  
*Fraxinus americana*: white ash, early, yellow-orange to purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Fraxinus excelsior* ‘Aureafolia’: Golden Desert® European ash, early, bright gold fall color, zone 5a  
*Fraxinus nigra* ‘Fallgold’: Fallgold black ash, early, golden yellow fall color, zone 3a  
*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*: green ash, red ash, early, yellow to gold fall color, zone 2a  
*Ginkgo biloba*: ginkgo, bright golden-yellow fall color, zone 4b, select male cultivars only  
*Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis*: thornless honeylocust, early, bright golden-yellow fall color, zone 4a  
*Gymnocladus dioica*: Kentucky coffeetree, yellow fall color, zone 4a  
*Larix decidua*: European larch, late, yellow fall color, zone 3a  
*Larix kaempferi*: Japanese larch, late, yellow fall color, zone 4a  
*Larix laricina*: American larch, tamarack, late, yellow fall color, zone 2a  
*Liquidambar styraciflua*: sweetgum, late, yellow to red to purple fall color, zone 5b  
*Liriodendron tulipifera*: tuliptree, tulip-poplar, golden yellow fall color, zone 5a  
*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*: dawn redwood, late, russet-brown to orange-brown fall color, zone 5b  
*Nyssa sylvatica*: black gum, tupelo, sour gum, orange-red to scarlet-purple fall color, zone 4b  
*Phellodendron amurense* ‘Macho’: Macho Amur corktree, early, yellow fall color, zone 3b  
*Phellodendron lavallei* ‘Longenecker’: Eyestopper™ Lavalley corktree, early, bright yellow fall color, zone 5a  
*Populus grandidentata*: bigtooth aspen, yellow fall color, zone 3b  
*Populus tremula* ‘Erecta’: upright European aspen, yellow fall color, zone 2b  
*Populus tremuloides*: quaking aspen, bright yellow fall color, zone 2a  
*Prunus pennsylvanica*: pin cherry, fire cherry, salmon-orange fall color, zone 2b  
*Pyrus ussuriensis*: Ussurian pear, yellow to reddish purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Pseudolarix amabilis*: golden larch, early, bright orange to golden fall color, zone 5a  
*Quercus alba*: white oak, late, dark red to wine fall color, zone 3b  
*Quercus* × *bimundorum* ‘Crimschmidt’: Crimson Spire™ oak, late, rusty red to purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Quercus coccinea*: scarlet oak, late, red to scarlet fall color, zone 4b  
*Quercus palustris*: pin oak, late, russet to orange-red fall color, zone 4b  
*Quercus prinus*: chestnut oak, late, yellow-orange to brown fall color, zone 4b  
*Quercus rubra*: northern red oak, late, red to russet-red fall color, zone 3b

*Quercus velutina*: black oak, late, red fall color, zone 4b  
*Sassafras albidum*: sassafras, yellow, orange to scarlet fall color, zone 4b  
*Taxodium distichum*: baldcypress, late, russet-brown to orange-brown fall color, zone 4b  
*Tilia* ‘Harvest Gold’: Harvest Gold linden, golden yellow fall color, zone 3b  
*Ulmus americana*: American elm, yellow fall color, zone 3a  
*Ulmus* ‘Frontier’: Frontier elm, late, burgundy fall color, zone 5a  
*Zelkova serrata*: Japanese zelkova, late, yellow, bronze-red to orange fall color, zone 5b

## Small Trees with Showy Fall Color (< 30' tall)

*Acer griseum*: paperbark maple, late, orange to dark red to bronze fall color, zone 5b  
*Acer japonicum*: full moon maple, yellow to red fall color, zone 5b  
*Acer manschuricum*: Manchurian maple, early, bright orange-red fall color, zone 4b  
*Acer maximowiczianum*: nikko maple, yellow to red fall color, zone 5b  
*Acer palmatum*: Japanese maple, late, orange to bright red fall color, zone 5b  
*Acer pensylvanicum*: moosewood, snake-bark maple, striped maple, early, bright yellow fall color, zone 3b  
*Acer pseudosieboldianum*: Korean maple, purplebloom maple, late, orange to reddish purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Acer sieboldianum*: Siebold maple, late, yellow-orange to red fall color, zone 5a  
*Acer spicatum*: mountain maple, yellow to orange-red fall color, zone 3a  
*Acer tataricum* subsp. *ginnala*: Amur maple, yellow to orange to bright red fall color, zone 3a  
*Acer triflorum*: three-flowered maple, late, orange fall color, zone 4b  
*Acer truncatum*: Shantung maple, purpleblow maple, late, yellow-orange to purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Acer* ‘White Tigress’: White Tigress striped maple, early, bright yellow fall color, zone 4b  
*Amelanchier* × *grandiflora*: apple serviceberry, yellowish orange to red fall color, zone 3a  
*Amelanchier laevis*: Allegheny serviceberry, reddish bronze to orange fall color, zone 3a  
*Asimina triloba*: pawpaw, bright yellow fall color, zone 5a  
*Carpinus caroliniana*: muscledwood, American hornbeam, yellow, orange to red fall color, zone 3b  
*Cornus alternifolia*: pagoda dogwood, early, reddish purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Cornus kousa*: kousa dogwood, scarlet to purple fall color, zone 5a  
*Cotinus obovatus*: American smoketree, yellow-orange to red fall color, zone 4b  
*Crataegus crus-galli*: cockspur hawthorn, bronzy orange to reddish purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Crataegus phaenopyrum*: Washington hawthorn, orange, scarlet to reddish purple fall color, zone 4b

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*Crataegus viridis* 'Winter King': Winter King hawthorn, variable, yellow to orange fall color, zone 4b  
*Parrotia persica*: Persian parrotia, yellow, orange and red fall color, zone 5b  
*Prunus* 'Accolade': Accolade cherry, bright yellow to orange fall color, zone 4b  
*Prunus americana*: American plum, orange to yellow fall color, zone 3b  
*Prunus mandshurica*: Manchurian apricot, golden-orange fall color, zone 3b  
*Prunus sargentii*: Sargent cherry, orangish red to bronze fall color, zone 4b  
*Pyrus calleryana* 'Autumn Blaze': Autumn Blaze callery pear, reddish orange to purple fall color, zone 4b  
*Pyrus* 'Edgedell': Edgewood® pear, deep, reddish purple fall color, zone 5a  
*Pyrus fauriei* 'Westwood': Korean Sun™ pear, reddish orange to purple fall color, zone 4b  
*Sorbus alnifolia*: Korean mountainash, yellow to orange-red fall color, zone 4a  
*Sorbus americana*: American mountainash, orange-yellow to reddish purple fall color, zone 2b  
*Sorbus aucuparia*: European mountainash, variable, yellowish orange to purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Sorbus decora*: showy mountainash, yellow-orange to red fall color, zone 2b  
*Stewartia pseudocamellia*: Japanese stewartia, yellow, orange, red to dark reddish purple fall color, zone 5a

### Large and Medium-Sized Shrubs with Showy Fall Color (> 6' tall)

*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye, early, bright yellow fall color, zone 4b  
*Aronia arbutifolia* 'Brilliantissima': Brilliant red chokeberry, red-orange to purple fall color, zone 4b  
*Aronia melanocarpa* var. *elata*: glossy black chokeberry, early, orange to wine-red fall color, zone 3b  
*Aronia* × *prunifolia*: purple chokeberry, early, wine-red to purplish red fall color, zone 4a  
*Chionanthus virginicus*: fringetree, yellow fall color, zone 4b  
*Cornus racemosa*: gray dogwood, reddish purple to purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Cornus sanguinea* 'Midwinter Fire': Midwinter Fire (or Winter Flame) bloodtwig dogwood, bright yellow fall color, zone 4a  
*Cornus stolonifera*: redosier dogwood, redtwig dogwood, variable, yellow to reddish purple fall color, zone 3a  
*Corylus americana*: American hazelnut, American filbert, yellow to orange fall color, zone 3a  
*Cotinus coggygria* 'Nordine': Nordine smokebush, orange-yellow to purplish fall color, zone 4b  
*Cotoneaster lucidus*: hedge cotoneaster, late, yellow to reddish orange fall color, zone 3a  
*Euonymus alatus*: winged euonymus, burningbush, late, pinkish to bright red fall color, zone 4a  
*Euonymus hamiltonianus* subsp. *sieboldianus*: yeddo euonymus, orange to reddish purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Fothergilla major*: large fothergilla, late, bright yellow-orange to red fall color, zone 4b  
*Hamamelis vernalis*: vernal witchhazel, late, golden-yellow fall color, zone 4b  
*Hamamelis virginiana*: common witchhazel, bright yellow fall color, zone 3b

*Lindera benzoin*: spicebush, bright yellow to golden fall color, zone 5b  
*Rhododendron arborescens*: sweet azalea, reddish fall color, zone 5b  
*Rhus copallina*: winged sumac, shining sumac, early, bright red to scarlet fall color, zone 4b  
*Rhus glabra*: smooth sumac, early, orange to scarlet to purple fall color, zone 3a  
*Rhus typhina*: staghorn sumac, early, orange to scarlet fall color, zone 3b  
*Syringa oblata*: broadleaf lilac, late, wine-red fall color, zone 3b  
*Vaccinium corymbosum*: highbush blueberry, orange to red fall color, zone 3a  
*Viburnum carlesii*: Koreanspice viburnum, late, reddish wine fall color, zone 4b  
*Viburnum dentatum*: arrowwood viburnum, variable, yellow to orange-red to purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Viburnum lentago*: nannyberry viburnum, reddish purple fall color, zone 3a  
*Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum*: doublefile viburnum, late, wine-red fall color, zone 5b  
*Viburnum prunifolium*: blackhaw viburnum, reddish purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Viburnum rufidulum*: rusty blackhaw, burgundy to maroon fall color, zone 5b  
*Viburnum sargentii*: Sargent viburnum, yellow to red to burgundy fall color, zone 4a  
*Viburnum sieboldii* 'Wavecrest': Wavecrest Siebold viburnum, red to burgundy fall color, zone 5a  
*Viburnum trilobum*: American cranberrybush viburnum, yellow to reddish purple fall color, zone 3a

### Smaller Shrubs with Showy Fall Color (< 6' tall)

*Amelanchier stolonifera*: running serviceberry, yellow to orange fall color, zone 3a  
*Berberis* 'Baisel': Golden Carousel® barberry, bright orange-red fall color, zone 4a  
*Berberis* 'Tara': Emerald Carousel® barberry, red to reddish purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Berberis koreana*: Korean barberry, reddish purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Berberis thunbergii* var. *atropurpurea*: purpleleaf Japanese barberry, late, orange to wine-red fall color, zone 4a  
*Cotoneaster apiculatus*: cranberry cotoneaster, late, reddish purple to bronze fall color, zone 4b  
*Cotoneaster divaricatus*: spreading cotoneaster, late, orange-red fall color, zone 5b  
*Cotoneaster* 'Hessei': Hesse cotoneaster, late, reddish purple fall color, zone 5a  
*Cotoneaster horizontalis*: rockspray cotoneaster, late, reddish purple fall color, zone 5a  
*Dirca palustris*: leatherwood, early, bright yellow fall color, zone 4a  
*Euonymus alatus* 'Rudy Haag': Rudy Haag winged euonymus, late, bright red fall color, zone 4a  
*Euonymus nanus* var. *turkestanicus*: Turkestan dwarf euonymus, bright red fall color, zone 4a  
*Forsythia viridissima* 'Bronxensis': Bronx forsythia, dark burgundy to purple fall color, zone 5a  
*Forsythia viridissima* 'Klein Autumnal': Klein Autumnal forsythia, dark burgundy to purple fall color, zone 5a  
*Forsythia gardenii*: dwarf fothergilla, late bright yellow-orange to red fall color, zone 4b

*Hydrangea quercifolia*: oakleaf hydrangea, late, reddish orange to wine fall color, zone 5b  
*Itea virginica*: Virginia sweetspire, late, scarlet to reddish purple fall color, zone 5b  
*Rhododendron calendulaceum*: flame azalea, yellow to red fall color, zone 5a  
*Rhododendron* hybrids: hybrid azaleas, variable fall color from yellow, orange or red, hardiness zone varies (3b-5b)  
*Rhododendron mucronulatum*: Korean rhododendron, reddish orange to red fall color, zone 4b  
*Rhododendron prinophyllum*: roshell azalea, yellow to red fall color, zone 4b  
*Rhododendron schlippenbachii*: royal azalea, reddish to red-orange fall color, zone 5a  
*Rhododendron vaseyi*: pinkshell azalea, deep burgundy fall color, zone 5a  
*Rhododendron yedoense* var. *poukhanense*: Korean azalea, orange-red fall color, zone 5b  
*Rhus aromatica*: fragrant sumac, orange, red to purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Rosa* × *calocarpa*: Calocarpa rose, orange to red to maroon fall color, zone 5a  
*Rosa carolina*: Carolina rose, pasture rose, red fall color, zone 4a  
*Rosa nitida*: shining rose, reddish purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Rosa setigera*: prairie rose, Michigan rose, reddish orange fall color, zone 4a  
*Rosa virginiana*: Virginia rose, deep, reddish purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Spiraea betulifolia* 'Tor': Tor birchleaf spirea, yellow-gold to orange-red fall color, zone 4a  
*Spiraea fritschiana*: Korean spirea, yellow-orange fall color, zone 4a  
*Spiraea japonica*: Japanese spirea, variable by cultivar, bronzy red to purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Spiraea prunifolia*: bridalwreath spirea, orange to purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Spiraea thunbergii*: Thunberg spirea, orange-yellow fall color, zone 4a  
*Syringa meyeri* 'Palibin': Palibin lilac, dwarf Korean lilac, late, purple to maroon fall color, zone 4a  
*Syringa pubescens* subsp. *patula* 'Miss Kim': Miss Kim lilac, late, purple to maroon fall color, zone 3b  
*Viburnum cassinoides*: witherod viburnum, orange-red to red to purple fall color, zone 4a  
*Viburnum nudum*: smooth witherod viburnum, red to reddish purple fall color, zone 5b

### Groundcovers with Showy Fall Color

*Cornus canadensis*: bunchberry, creeping dogwood, red to purple fall color, zone 3a  
*Prunus pumila* var. *depressa*: eastern sandcherry, crimson-red fall color, zone 4b  
*Rhus aromatica* 'Gro-Low': Gro Low fragrant sumac, orange, red to purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Xanthorhiza simplicissima*: yellowroot, yellow to orange fall color, zone 3b

### Vines with Showy Fall Color

*Parthenocissus inserta*: woodbine, early, red fall color, zone 3b  
*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*: Virginia creeper, early reddish purple fall color, zone 3b  
*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*: Boston ivy, orange to reddish purple fall color, zone 4b