

Gardening with Nature

by Sigrie Kendrick

STARS OF THE FALL GARDEN

Xeriscape perennials show its not just about rocks and cacti

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Photo: Contributed

Rudbeckia "Goldsturm" is just one of a wide variety of drought-tolerant plants that will be available Saturday at the first fall plant sale to be held by the Okanagan Xeriscape Association in Kelowna.

In welcoming autumn planting of perennials, the [Okanagan Xeriscape Association](#) will hold its first fall plant sale this weekend.

OXA recently expanded its extensive plant database at www.okanaganxeriscape.org to include many more plants suitable for use in our arid Okanagan Valley. On our website and in our social media you'll also find fantastic photos of inspiring xeriscape gardens from around the valley, which dispel the myth that xeriscape is simply rocks and cacti.

Many of the stars of the fall garden will be included for purchase and will include, but are not limited to, ornamental grasses, sedums, and asters.

For instance, we will have Schizachrium scoparium "Blue Heaven" available for purchase which has been chosen as plant of the year by the Perennial Plant Association. This ornamental grass features steel-blue foliage during the summer that slowly transitions to purple, red and orange shades and is extremely forgiving of poor soil and drought conditions.

Also available will be Panicum virgatum "Blood Brothers," which is featured on our website right now as Plant of the Month. As a lover of red plants, I am absolutely enthralled with its foliage which transitions to a deep wine colour as the temperature dips.

We will also have a variety of sedums available, both tall—such as the cultivars "Autumn Joy" and "Matrona"—and ground covers, such as Sedum rupestre "Angelina" and "Blue spruce," as well as "Dragon's Blood."

All of these sedums attract pollinators and the tall sedums are fall bloomers and good choices for extending interest in the garden—for people and insects alike. Both tall sedums and ground cover sedums are excellent choices for sunny, dry areas of your garden and are especially well-suited for planting in rock gardens.

It has been said nature abhors a vacuum, and if you have a sedum somewhere in your garden, you won't have a weed in its place.

Asters serve as some of the brightest colours in the fall garden and none are better, in my opinion, than Aster frikartii "Monch." This Aster starts blooming in July and continues its delightful pale purple blossoms through to fall without the usual need for time-consuming deadheading. Aster frikartii is a star in a mixed perennial bed where its cool-coloured blooms contrast nicely with all of the warm yellow, golden and red hues which are typically associated with the autumn garden.

These and many other perennials will be offered at the sale, which also serves as the primary fundraiser for our non-profit organization. Stop by the sale and add some xeric choices to your garden. A full list of available plants will be posted on our website prior to sale day.

OXA's bright, yellow t-shirts, in both long-sleeve and short-sleeve styles, will also be available.

The sale will be held at the UnH2O Xeriscape Demonstration Garden, 4075 Gordon Drive, Kelowna Oct. 1 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Okanagan Xeriscape Association is extremely grateful for the ongoing financial support of the Okanagan Basin Water Board and is proud to collaborate with its Make Water Work program.

Watch for me at nurseries this season promoting their plant collection.

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