

## Perennial plant species suitable for autumn marketing

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### Introduction

This review provides descriptive and cultural details of plants suitable for autumn marketing. The plants were selected because of stand-out feature(s) of interest present during the autumn, either flowers, foliage colour, or fruit present.




The subjects were identified during the autumn of 2021 at six garden centres in the South East: Pole Hill, Sevenoaks; Coolings Garden Centre, Sevenoaks; The Potted Garden, Bearsted; Dobbies, Ashford; Longacres, Ashford; RHS, Wisley.



### Key to abbreviations and icons:

- **Plant type:** Shrub (S); Hardy perennial (HP), Half hardy perennial (HHP); Annual (A)
- **Flowering season:** Spring (Sp); summer (Su); Autumn (A); Winter (W)
- **pH:** Acidic (Ac); Alkaline (Al)
- **Hardiness ratings** extracted from: [RHS plant hardiness zones \(UK\)](#)

### Key to features of interest:

Leaf colour		Flowers		Berries	
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### [RHS plant hardiness zones \(UK\):](#)




- **H3** half-hardy: unheated greenhouse or mild winter; -5°C to 1°C
- **H4** hardy: average winter; -10°C to -5°C
- **H5** hardy: cold winter; -15°C to -10°C
- **H6** hardy: very cold winter; -20°C to -15°C
- **H7** very hardy; less than -20°C








### References

Owen, W. G. and Latimer, J. G. (2023) A guide to growing high quality perennials. Growth regulators for containerised herbaceous perennial plants. 2022-23. GrowerTalks. Ball Publishing. Available at: [PGR Guide 2022-2023.pdf \(fine-americas.com\)](#). Accessed 22.03.2023

RHS (2021) AGM Plants. Available at: [See RHS lists of top AGM garden-worthy plants, fruit & veg / RHS Gardening](#) Accessed 22.03.2023

**Table 1.** Autumn marketed subjects. AGM = RHS Award of Garden Merit

Genus/species	Plant type	Shrub / Hardy perennial / Annual	Plant ultimate height (m)	pH	Flowering season	Hardiness rating	Plant breeder rights	Feature of autumn interest	Pot size	Price (retail)	Comments & recommendations
<b>Aster</b>	<a href="#">Showmaker series</a>	HHP	0.3	5.0 – 5.5	Su Au	H3	×		14 cm 17 cm	£5 £7	<p><b>Description:</b> Compact double flowered, available in various colours (lilac, mauve, magenta, white) produced by Royal Van Zanten.</p> <p><b>P&amp;D:</b> Botrytis, powdery mildew.</p> <p><b>Growth control:</b> <i>Aster x frikartii</i> and <i>Aster novae-angliae</i> are responsive to daminozide and paclobutrazol.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Full sun. Response time 6 weeks.</p>
<b>Aster</b>	Autumn Jewels series Aqua Compact	HP	0.3	5.0 – 5.5	Su Au	H7	×		11 cm 1 L 2 L 3 L	£9 (2 L plant)	<p><b>Description:</b> Compact with semi-double turquoise blue flowers.</p> <p><b>P&amp;D:</b> Botrytis, powdery mildew.</p> <p><b>Growth control:</b> <i>Aster x frikartii</i> and <i>Aster novae-angliae</i> are responsive to daminozide and paclobutrazol.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Full sun / part shade. Early flowering.</p> <p><b>Production:</b> Winter 20 weeks; Spring / Summer 8 weeks (plug to 1 L pot). Production temperature 4 -12 °C.</p>
<b>Aster amellus</b>  AGM	King George	HP	0.45	N - AL	Su Au	H7	×		2 L	£13	<p><b>Description:</b> Large purple-blue flowers to 6 cm diameter.</p> <p><b>P&amp;D:</b> Botrytis, leafspot. Good resistance to powdery mildew. Slugs, snails, aphids, leaf and bud nematodes.</p> <p><b>Growth control:</b> <i>Aster x frikartii</i> and <i>Aster novae-angliae</i> are responsive to daminozide and paclobutrazol.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Full sun.</p>

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<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Garden Girl series Twin Girls	HP	0.5	Ac - N	Su Au	H7	×		13 cm	£2	<b>Description:</b> Dwarf heather. <b>P&amp;D:</b> Phytophthora root rot, <i>Rhizoctonia</i> . <b>Note:</b> Full sun.
<i>Ceratostigma plumbaginoides</i>  AGM	-	HP	0.5	5.0 – 5.5	Su Au	H5	×	 	11 cm 1 L 3 L	£6 (1 L)	<b>Description:</b> Low growing with green foliage becoming red – purple in autumn, blue flowers. <b>P&amp;D:</b> Powdery mildew. <b>Note:</b> Full sun / part shade. <b>Production:</b> 10 weeks in spring / summer, (plug to 1 L pot). Production temperature 4 – 12°C.
<i>Erica arborea</i>  AGM	Albert's Gold	S	2.0 m	Ac - N	Sp	H4	×		13 cm 3 L	£5 £18	<b>Description:</b> Evergreen with fine golden-yellow foliage, and panicles of small, fragrant white flowers. <b>P&amp;D:</b> Aphid, Phytophthora root rot, <i>Rhizoctonia</i> . <b>Note:</b> Full sun.
<i>Euonymus alatus</i>  AGM	Compactus	S	1.5		Sp	H6	×	 	9 cm	£9	<b>Description:</b> Dwarf deciduous shrub with dark green leaves turning red in autumn. Corky 'wings' on branches. <b>P&amp;D:</b> Aphids, caterpillars, scale, vine weevil, powdery mildew, leaf spots. <b>Note:</b> Full sun / part shade.
<i>Gaultheria procumbens</i>	Big Berry	S	0.5	Ac - N-	Su	H5	✓		9 cm 15 cm	£11	<b>Description:</b> Seed raised. Glossy evergreen leaves, white / pale pink flower followed by red or white berries. <b>P&amp;D:</b> Generally pest free.

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<i>Hebe</i>	Silver Anniversary	S	0.5	Al - N	Su	H3	x		2 L	£8	<p><b>Description:</b> Compact. Variegated grey-green, cream margined foliage, flushed reddish-purple in winter.</p> <p><b>P&amp;D:</b> Aphids, leaf spot, downy mildew.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Sun / part shade.</p>
<i>Hebe</i>	Heartbreaker	S	0.6	Any	Su	H3	✓		4 L	£9	<p><b>Description:</b> Compact. Dark grey-green, cream margined foliage, becoming pink in cold conditions.</p> <p><b>P&amp;D:</b> Aphids, tortrix moth, leaf spot, downy mildew, phytophthora.</p> <p><b>Growth control:</b> Generally not required; pinch for bushy growth, responsive to paclobutrazol.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Sun / part shade.</p>
<i>Hypericum</i>	Miracle series Attraction	S	1.0	Any	Su	H5	✓	  	2 L	£11	<p><b>Description:</b> Compact, deciduous shrub with red berries.</p> <p><b>P&amp;D:</b> Aphids, Rust.</p> <p><b>Growth control:</b> <i>Hypericum calcynium</i> responsive to daminozide and paclobutrazol.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Sun/part shade.</p>

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<i>Leucothoe carinella</i> AGM	Scarletta	S	1.0	Ac - N	Sp	H6	x		2 L	£14	<b>Description:</b> Compact evergreen, glossy foliage emerges maroon, becomes dark red in autumn. <b>P&amp;D:</b> Generally pest free. <b>Nutrition:</b> Ericaceous growing media. <b>Note:</b> Shade / part shade.
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Golden Tower	S	3.0	Ac - Al	Su	H6	✓	 	9 cm 2 L	£7 £18	<b>Description:</b> Scented white flowers, golden divided pinnate foliage. Red, white or black berries. <b>P&amp;D:</b> Aphids, Two spotted spider mite, powdery mildew. <b>Growth control:</b> Pinch as required.
<i>Sedum spectabile</i> AGM	Autumn Joy	HP	0.6	AL - N	Au	H7	x		9 cm	£5	<b>Description:</b> Succulent, glaucous green leaves, darkening pink flowers. <b>P&amp;D:</b> Slugs, snails, vine weevil, powdery mildew, root diseases. <b>Growth control:</b> Pinch as required. <i>Sedum spectabile</i> 'Autumn Joy' responsive to daminozide and paclobutrazol. <b>Note:</b> Drought resistant. Full sun.
<i>Sedum</i>	<a href="#">SunSparkler series</a> Wildfire	HP	0.2	Al - N	Su Au	H7	✓	 	9 cm	£6	<b>Description:</b> Bred by Garden Solutions. A compact succulent with intense red variegated with deep red flowers. <b>P&amp;D:</b> Slugs, snails, vine weevil, root disease. <b>Growth control:</b> No pinching or growth regulation generally required. <b>Note:</b> Drought resistant. Full sun.

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<i>Sedum takesimense</i>	Atlantis	HP	0.3	Ac - N	Su	H7	✓		9 cm	£6	<p><b>Description:</b> Green foliage with cream scalloped margins sometimes flushed pink in autumn. Yellow flowers.</p> <p><b>P&amp;D:</b> Slugs, snails, vine weevil, root disease.</p> <p><b>Growth control:</b> Pinch as required. <i>Sedum spectabile</i> 'Autumn Joy' responsive to daminozide and paclobutrazol.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Drought resistant. Full sun.</p>
<i>Skimmia japonica</i> subsp. <i>Reevesiana</i>	-	S	1.0	All	Sp	H5	×		1.5 L	£14	<p><b>Description:</b> Compact, evergreen. Self-fertile, red berries.</p> <p><b>P&amp;D:</b> Two spotted spider mite, Scale insects, vine weevil, <i>Phytophthora</i>, <i>Pythium</i>, <i>Thielaviopsis</i>.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Partial – full shade. Wear gloves when handling as this plant is toxic.</p>
<i>Skimmia japonica</i> AGM	Rubella	S	1.5	Ac - N	Sp	H5	×		9 cm 2 L	£6 £18	<p><b>Description:</b> Compact male shrub. Dark evergreen leaves, red margins. Dark red flower buds in autumn.</p> <p><b>P&amp;D:</b> Two spotted spider mite, Scale insects, vine weevil, <i>Phytophthora</i>, <i>Pythium</i>, <i>Thielaviopsis</i>.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Avoid full sun. Wear gloves when handling as this plant is toxic.</p>
<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>	Fireballs	S	0.4	Ac	Su	H5	✓		2 L	£14	<p><b>Description:</b> Compact, dense, ground covering. White flowers, semi evergreen, red berries.</p> <p><b>P&amp;D:</b> Powdery mildew, rust, leaf spot, Botrytis, root disease and caterpillars.</p> <p><b>Nutrition:</b> Ericaceous growing media, otherwise potential chlorosis due to iron deficiency. Moist but well drained growing media.</p>