

MESSENGER-INQUIRER

	University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Cooperative Extension Service
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Shrubs Add a Variety of Interests throughout the Season
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Different shrubs available provide an opportunity to create various areas of interest in the landscape. Flowering period, fruit color, and fall foliage color offer characteristics to enjoy different times of the year. Remember, the best time to plant most woody plants like shrubs is in the fall.

An early blooming shrub is Arnold Promise witchhazel, *Hamamelis X intermedia* 'Arnold Promise', which blooms in February. This shrub reaches 15 to 20 feet tall and spreads over 15 feet wide. The cultivar Arnold Promise is one of the best yellow flowering witchhazels. The thin, narrow petals of the small yellow flowers twist. When you see this plant blooming in February, it seems hard to believe your eyes. The fall leaf color is reddish-purple.

Large fothergilla, *Fothergilla major*, 'Mt. Airy' is a multi-stemmed shrub reaching 5 to 6 feet tall and 4 to 5 feet wide. The white flower is 1.5 to 2 inches long and about 1-inch wide. It looks like a bottlebrush since there are no petals and the stamens are the showy part of the flower. The blooms open in April and last about 2 to 3 weeks. They open a little ahead of the

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leaves emerging in the spring. Leaves are blue-green during the growing season. In the fall, leaves change to yellow-orange. It prefers moist, acidic soil and will grow in part shade. The plant will sucker and become wider. Remove the suckers to reduce the width of the plant as it grows older.

Buttonbush 'Moonlight', *Cephalanthus occidentalis* Magical 'Moonlight', is a smaller cultivar than the native buttonbush. Even though it is smaller, this cultivar may reach 5 to 8 feet tall and 4 to 6 feet wide. The white flowers are fragrant and form a ball. The flowers of this plant attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and other pollinators in late spring. Birds love the fruits produced. It prefers to grow in wet soils but will adapt to a dry site. It grows in full to part sun.

Hydrangea 'Ruby Slippers', *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Ruby Slippers', is a compact form of an oak leaf hydrangea. 'Ruby Slippers' grows 3 to 4 feet tall and 3 to 5 feet wide. The large 9-inch long, conical, upright flower panicles emerge in late spring with white sterile flowers. As the flowers mature, they quickly turn pink and mature to ruby red. The approximately 5-inch long, dark green leaves are deeply lobed. In the fall, the leaves turn mahogany red. In the winter, enjoy the pretty exfoliating bark on mature branches revealing a brown inner bark.

A nice cultivar of *Viburnum x burkwoodii* is Mohawk. The dark red flower buds add several weeks of interest before opening with whitish-pink petals in the spring. The flowers have a spicy clove fragrance. Fall leaf color is orange-red. 'Mohawk' may reach 7 to 8 feet tall with a spread of 7 feet.

Summersweet clethra, *Clethra alnifolia*, is a shrub that blooms in June and July with white flowers attached up and down a 2- to 6-inch-long stem. Individual flowers are .33 inch

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wide. The flowers open first at the bottom of the stem where the blossoms are attached and continue up to the tip resulting in a long blooming period. Flowers are fragrant. The height of the shrub ranges from 3 to 8 feet and spreads 4 to 6 feet wide. Clethra prefers moist to wet soil and thrives in partial shade to full sun.

Virginia sweetspire, *Itea virginica*, is a shrub 3 to 5 feet in height. In June and July, fragrant, white flowers are arranged on a spike-like stem forming a 2- to 6-inch-long flower cluster. The leaves are dark green in the summer and change to an outstanding show of reddish purple, scarlet, and crimson in the fall. Virginia sweetspire prefers soil that holds moisture. It can be planted in full sun or shade.

Glossy abelia, *Abelia xgrandiflora*, blooms during the summer months of July through August and possibly into September. The flowers are shaped like a funnel and are white with a hint of pink. Flowers appear on new growth. The plant forms a mounding habit. It can grow 3 to 6 feet tall and wide. Abelia prefers an acidic soil that is well-drained.

The common winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*, is a deciduous holly with many bright red fruits that persist into winter. The slow to medium growing shrub can reach 6 to 8 feet in height and width. Male flowers and female flowers are produced on different plants. To have berries, include a male plant with several female plants. Good cultivars of winterberry are available that have been selected for fruit size, fruit color, or fall leaf color.

For more information about shrubs, contact the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service at 270-685-8480 or annette.heisdorffer@uky.edu.

Annette's Tip:

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Don't forget to remove mummified fruits hanging on trees and vines as part of your sanitation practices in the garden and landscape. Practicing good sanitation in the garden and landscape slows the development of diseases and insects for next year.

Upcoming Event:

“No Space is Too Small: Planting Natives to Attract Birds and Butterflies” will be presented by Sharon Sorenson on October 8 at 1:00 p.m. at the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service at 4800A New Hartford Rd., Owensboro. Discussing how to attract birds to a small patio will be included. The program is cosponsored by the Green River Area Extension Master Gardener Association and Daviess County Cooperative Extension Office.

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