

## BELL COUNTY MASTER GARDENER

### Tip of the Week

#### Fall Color in the Native Garden

By Mary Lew Quesinberry

Cool evenings, falling leaves, football and chrysanthemums- it must be fall in Central Texas. Central Texas usually receives 2-3 inches of rainfall per month during the fall. The rain and the cooler nighttime temperatures revive perennial plants, which have really suffered from the hot summer weather. When choosing plant material for fall color think beyond the traditional chrysanthemum. There are many native plants that put on a beautiful fall display. Most native plants are tough and drought tolerant and must have good drainage to survive in our Central Texas clay soil. When adding a new plant to your landscape dig the hole wider but no deeper than the pot the plant is in. I always add 1-2 inches of decomposed granite to the bottom of the hole. Tease the root-ball of the new plant so the roots won't continue to grow in a circle. Add more decomposed granite to the soil used to fill in around the plant and water frequently until established. A wide range of colorful native plants are available such as:

Purple color: Fall Aster, *Salvia greggii*, Orchid Vine, Russian Sage, Mexican Sage

Red Color: Cedar Sage, Mountain Sage, Pineapple Sage, Turk's Cap, Flame Acanthus

Pink color: Texas Betany, Cigar Plant, *Salvia greggii*, Skullcap

Blue color: Mealy Blue Sage, Plumbago, Gregg's Blue Mistflower

Yellow color: Yellow Bird of Paradise, Thryallis, Flowering Senna, Zexmenia, Esperanza, Mexican Mint Marigold, Copper Canyon Daisy

White color: Beebrush (*Aloysia*), Blackfoot Daisy, *Salvia greggii*, Sweet Autumn Clematis

Red/purple color: Bat-Faced Cuphea, Cigar plant

Native perennial plants will add color and fragrance to your fall garden. Some like the salvias, Russian Sage, Skullcap and Blackfoot Daisy bloom 11 months of the year. When planning for fall color consider a native plant. It will reward you with reliable color for years.

Questions? [ask.bcmga@gmail.com](mailto:ask.bcmga@gmail.com)

in the photo: Red Globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*) a wonderful drought tolerant perennial plant that blooms all summer into fall.

