



### *Garden Designer Gillian Goodson revels in seasonal colour*

**G**reet that crisp air as you open the front door and the sparkle of morning sunlight on dew-covered lawns with open arms, take deep breaths and let it invigorate and kick-start your day. We lose our playfulness with age and responsibility – but it is still there buried within us. Release the inner child; abandon your cares and twirl among newly fallen leaves. Welcome to mid-autumn!

There are fiery colours in the garden this month and they come in the form of leaves and berries more so than flower. For a sunny spot in the garden, there's the upright, suckering shrub/small tree *Rhus typhina* (stag's horn sumach – up to 8m). Its palmate leaves turn a spectacular orange-red. If you have a bit more room, it's hard to beat *Prunus sargentii* (sargent's cherry – up to 20m) for rich red autumnal tones and soft pink blooms in spring.

Look no further than *Viburnum opulus* (guelder rose) for gloriously plump, scarlet berries. This deciduous shrub, with maple-like leaves, turns pink-red. In late spring-early

summer it has flat, white clusters of flowers. *V. opulus* 'Roseum' has snowball-shaped clusters of creamy-green to white flowers.

If you are still scratching around for late-flowering inspiration, there's the towering, lemon-yellow of daisy-shaped *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen' (until early October), or the gorgeous purple of newly introduced *Salvia* 'Amistad' – it will need winter protection if not given a sheltered spot.

As frost becomes more of a threat this month, bring in your tender plants, dig and divide large clumps of perennials, tidy borders, prepare the soil for next year – spread well-rotted compost to improve your soil and start new compost.

If you didn't plant your alliums in September then it's not too late. If you were hypnotised by the abundance of colour choices and flower shapes, and piled your shopping baskets with tulip bulbs, then you'll be relieved to know that from late October through to early November you can plant away! Lift potatoes, Jerusalem artichokes and plant spring cabbage.

Trees are bejeweled with fruit. As we fill pantries with our bountiful pickings and take joy in the delightful smells wafting from the kitchen, we may be forgiven for forgetting all about All Hallows' Eve ... beware the ghoulish costumes or tulle princess dresses that come-a-knocking!

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*Head-turning orange-red of Rhus typhina*