



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

Wholesale Supplier To Landscape Professionals

Successional blooming in the landscape

Landscapers know that most trees, shrubs and perennials generally bloom only one to two weeks in a season. Successional blooming refers to the practice of planning your plantings so that a series of different plants bloom one after the other throughout the year; that way something is always (hopefully) in flower.

Let's face it, it's easy to have lots of blooms in May, June and July. The challenge comes in finding blooms for March/April and August, September, October and November!



The early season at "Chateau Bill" starts off with hundreds of Crocus, followed one to two weeks later by Chionodoxa luciliae. I particularly like Chionodoxa for its ability to thrive in areas that will shortly become densely shaded. These bulbs, along with Tulips and Daffodils need to be planted in the fall, after October first.

The first woody plants to bloom for me are Forsythia and Cornus mas, followed by the early Magnolias like 'Merrill' and 'Royal Star'.

On the perennial side, my early blooming favorite is Iberis sempervirens. The evergreen foliage looks good all year, while the intensely white flowers are a visual punch to the eyeballs. The only downside to this plant is that it needs an acidic, well drained soil.

In August and September Black-eyed Susan, Rose of Sharon, and Hydrangea 'Limelight' are reliable and striking performers. My favorite bloom producer for September is Physostegia or Obedient plant. This is a lavender pink flower that forms dense stands that exclude weeds. I'd also like to give an honorable mention to Tricyrtis or Toad Lily for October bloom. We have Rudbeckia hirta 'Indian Summer' that is a self seeding biennial that can sometimes bloom in October and November.

Did you know that Rosas Knock Out, Carpet and Drift will continuously bloom until frost if you keep them deadheaded? Geranium 'Rozanne' is the only perennial I know that will bloom until (or past) frost without deadheading! I will not design a perennial garden without it!

In finishing, I'd like to cover some successional pairings. PJM Rhododendron followed 7-10 days later by PJM 'Olga Mezzitt'. Cornus florida followed 2-3 weeks later by Cornus kousa. Deciduous Azaleas followed by evergreen Azaleas followed by large leafed Rhodos.

Pay attention to early and late bloomers, and incorporate them into your planting designs for more all season-long color.



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