

I have a lot of warm socks that take up quite a lot of room in my chest of drawers. This is the result of many 'in-desperation' Christmas purchases (fortunately, I have avoided budget aftershave). All through the summer I shove them to one side in the search for something lighter but, this month, the temperatures will drop enough for me to again enjoy the subtle pleasures of a cashmere sock. Hurrah for November, for glowing autumn colours, for bonfire night, for stands of waving grasses and for drifts of fallen leaves scuffling beneath our boots and, of course, for toasty toes.

Words by James Alexander-Sinclair

STAR OF THE MONTH
Euonymus alatus

One wet and rainy autumn a few years ago I went to give a talk in Vancouver, Canada. As I arrived at the venue the sun suddenly broke through and I realised that I was surrounded by a glorious crowd of *Euonymus alatus*. Flocks of five bushes dressed up in their autumnal finest - the colour is of a deeply beautiful bluish, apples fit for princesses and freshly kissed lips. I continued up the steps with a spring in my step and joy in my heart, since then I have planted lots of them in the hope that someone else will be equally enchanted.

Needs some sunshine for the best colour. Fruits are a remarkable pink with orange seeds. Prune in late winter or early spring.
Height x Spread 2m x 2m



PHOTO: JASON INGRAM

We love November
for autumn's bonfire glow

great for pots



THE UNEXPECTED

One of the great surprises of autumn. This shrub has been hanging around all year being pretty unremarkable. You can walk past it without even noticing, average size, average leaves, average flowers. Then suddenly, the foliage falls and we are confronted with a dazzling display of purple berries. Where on earth did they come from? It is the perfect demonstration of the expression "every dog has its day".

Calliopa bodinieri var. 'graidii' 'Profusion'

Unfussy and will be happy everywhere – except deep shade. Great for flower arrangers. Plant more than one to ensure efficient pollination.
H x S 5m x 2.5m

BIG GLOSSY GIANT

It is not often that you get something as architectural as this, that is, pretty, happy, growing anywhere. Sun, shade, town, country, hot or cold – It will smile politely and get on with its job. This is to have spectacular jazz-handed glossy green leaves with white flowers. Botanically these flowers are known as gl/odose bobbles of bloom, and for some reason they attract late season geriatric wasps enjoying their last few days.

Fatsia japonica

Hardy and evergreen everywhere but the very coldest gardens. Good choice for a dark corner. Propagate from semi-ripe cuttings.
H x S 3m x 3m



PHOTOS: SARAH CUTTLE; JASON INGRAM



REVEL IN RED

We all love a bit of red to cheer up an oncoming winter. That is why Santa has a scarlet tunic and why we love robins, as it will be a while before we get much natural colour back in our gardens. Here is the last stand – a container crammed with carmine.

Gaultheria procumbens

Prefers an acid soil but generally tolerant. Propagate by seed or semi-ripe cuttings. Happy in shade. **H x S** 30cm x 70cm

Skimmia japonica 'Rubella'

A great evergreen backbone for winter containers. Red buds open to white flowers. Neutral to acid soil. **H x S** 1.2m x 1.2m

Cyclamen 'SS Verano Red'

Needs frost protection so keep the container in a sheltered spot, such as a porch. Deadhead often. **H x S** 20cm x 20cm

Osmorhiza heterophyllus 'Goshiki'

Interesting variegation. Slow growing shrub. Propagate from semi-ripe cuttings in summer. **H x S** 1.2m x 1.2m

SILVER SERVICE

I have always thought cyclamen are a little like seahorses (I have a fevered imagination), which fits well with that silvery foliage crashing like sea foam across the purple leaves of the heuchera. Add some early-flowering bulbs and you will be set fair until springtime.

Brachyglottis 'Sunshine'

Will only last one season in a container (unless it is a very large one) so move to the border in spring. Full sun. **H x S** 1.2m x 1.2m

Heuchera 'Obsidian'

Good new variety with cream flowers in June-July. Keep well fed and watch out for vine weevils. Divide in spring. **H x S** 45cm x 30cm

Senecio cineraria 'Silver Dust'

Frost tender so only plant in a sheltered spot. Good as filler in flower arrangements. **H x S** 30cm x 30cm

Cyclamen cilicium album

Flowers appear with the leaves. Soak ripe seeds overnight before sowing in the dark. Good in a rock garden. **H x S** 12cm x 15cm



FAR EASTERN PROMISE

Now this is something a bit special - much rarer than its friend *E.alatus* which we met at the beginning of these pages. It is an evergreen from China that would make a spectacular feature plant in any small front garden. Only the hardest-hearted of passers by could fail to be enchanted by those little seeds dangling like scarlet pearls in the perfect earlobes of a smiling princess.

Euonymus myrianthus

Any aspect except full shade but best planted where it can be seen in autumn. Leaves are not that exciting in summer. **H x S** 3m x 3m