

Sprucing up a drab winter landscape

This time of year can be a little drab when most plants are dormant. However, several plants exhibit characteristics that can be interesting even in winter. Some plants have a colorful or interesting bark and twigs, colorful berries, unique seed heads and foliage with subtle natural tones.

Many of these characteristics don't just jump out at you so you may have to look closely. Sometimes a little stretch of the imag-



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ination is helpful to enjoy these intricate details provided by nature.

Several woody plants have interesting bark or twigs that sometimes go unnoticed until the leaves have fallen in the fall. Red twig dogwood can have bright red stems,

yellow twig dogwood with yellow stems and Japanese kerria with bright green stems. Trees with attractive bark include Heritage river birch, crapemyrtle, bald cypress, lacebark elm, and paperback maple. Harry Lauder's Walkingstick has twisted, gnarly stems that really stand out in winter and make for great additions to indoor flower arrangements.

Plants with showy fruits include chokeberry, cotoneaster;

dogwood, euonymus, firethorn, hawthorn, hollies, nandina and viburnum. Ornamental grasses often develop attractive plumes and the neutral tones of foliage that sway back and forth in the breezes add additional beauty and interest to the senses.

So, this winter take a look around your landscape and see what you can find and appreciate. And if you don't have many plants to enjoy this winter, think about planting some this year to

spruce up the landscape next winter. Remember, the next time you go shopping for plants consider other attributes that plants may have beside the typical spring/summer flower or fall color that we often seek.

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