HAH ROUNDTABLE
DECEMBER 3, 2016

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"Chameleon" Evergreens that Change Color in Winter

Thank you to those who participated in this Roundtable presentation and discussion, as there were quite a lot of competing horticultural events in the Hamptons that day. Also thanks to George Biercuk who not only had the idea for this unusual subject, but who brought in samples from his garden of azaleas whose leaves had already changed from green to their winter color (although we agreed that due to the mild November weather most changes in evergreen leaf color had not yet occurred.)

Azaleas –leaves of white-flowering varieties turn yellow, those of pink- and red-flowering turn bronze
Buxus (boxwood)* 'Winter Gem' turns bronze
Chamaecyparis thyoides 'Red Star' (Atlantic white cedar) – blue-green leaves turn plum/purple
Cryptomeria japonica* (Japanese cedar) - turns bronze
- **'Elegans'** (Japanse plume cedar) – blue-green needles turn bronze or deep purple
  - **'Elegans Nana'** – slow-growing dwarf that reaches 4-6 ft. tall
  - **'Elegans Compacta'** – dwarf that reaches 10 ft. tall
- **'Mushroom'** – 3-foot lime-green mound whose needles turn bronze-purple
- **'Pygmaea'** – only 10 inches tall; foliage turns purple, tinged with ember orange
- '**Vilmoriniana'** A dense, rounded conifer, tightly packed, whose deep-green foliage turns bronze-red
- **'Yoshino'** turns bronze

Euonymous fortuneii
- **'Emerald N Gold'** turns from summer yellow to winter gold
- **'Emerald Gaiety'** leaf edges turn pink

Juniperus horizontalis (creeping juniper) '**Blue Chip' and 'Mother Lode'** acquire purple tones
Mahonia (grape holly)* leaves turn purplish-bronze
Nandina domestica* (heavenly bamboo) non-spreading, foliage turns red and red berries develop
Pieris japonica* (andromeda) develops reddish flower buds from fall through winter that will bloom in spring
Pinus contorta* var. latifolia 'Chief Joseph' turns bright yellow
Pinus mugo* 'Winter Gold' develops golden tips
Pinus sylvestris* 'Aurea' (golden Scots pine) turns bright, golden-yellow
Rhododendron PJM turns bronze
Thuja (arborvitae) occidentalis 'Sanderi'– light-green foliage turns purplish-brown
Thuja orientalis turns light bronze
Thuja 'Woodwardii' turns bronze
Thuja 'Aurea' and 'Reingold' turn from summer gold to winter bronze

Groundcovers and low-growing evergreens

Ajuga reptans turns bronze* (this spreader can be invasive)
Andromeda polifolia* turns purple
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (bearberry) turns bronze
Euonymous fortuneii 'Coloratus' turns bronze (this spreader can be invasive)
Gerngenia cordifolia (cabbage-like leaves) turns garnet red
Calluna vulgaris* (heather) turns bronze
Gaultheria procumbens* (wintergreen) turns reddish-purple

Semi-evergreens

Geranium macrorrhizum* turns red/orange
Viburnum 'Conoy' turns purplish

Leaves that turn brown and stay on the tree until spring:

Carpinus betulus (European hornbeam)
Fagus (beech)
Ligustrum (privet) turns bronze/brown
Quercus (oak)

Changing and Colorful Stems and Bark in Winter:

Acer palmatum 'Sango-kaku' (coral bark maple) pinkish-red branches
Cornus alba (Tatarian dogwood) – stems turn red on newest wood
Cornus sanguinea (bloodtwig dogwood) 'Winter Flame' golden orange stems tipped with coral
Cornus sericea (red osier dogwood) – newest stems turn red
Hydrangea quercifolia (oakleaf) brown flower heads and exfoliating bark
Lagerstroemia (crape myrtle) bark exfoliates in fall and keeps brown and tan colors through winter
Salix integra (Nishiki willow) newest stems turn red
Salix matsudana 'Scarlet Curls' (willow) slender, curly twigs intensify in color

***Information about deer:**

An asterisk indicates that the plant is generally deer-resistant, at least in my neighborhood in Bridgehampton. Plants that deer usually eat only in winter, unless you frequently spray or your property is fenced in, include:

Azalea	Euonymous
Privet	Rhododendron
Thuja	Yew

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM ROUNDTABLE ATTENDEES:

Q: Does the conventional wisdom still hold that one should "feed on Thanksgiving?"
A: According to the website GrowingAGreenerWorld.com "The rationale for late fall fertilization makes sense when you understand why. At this time, deciduous trees and shrubs have lost their foliage for the year and active growth of plants and trees has slowed. Rather than put on new foliage growth, the roots of established trees or shrubs take the nutrients from the soil and apply them to important health-promoting functions, such as disease resistance and root development. The excess nutrients are stored in the roots and become immediately available when needed for new growth in spring." If your plants and soil are established and healthy, they may not need fertilizer at all. Topdressings of compost or mulch can be sufficient to protect the plant and amend the soil. However, it is always best to test your soil, and composition and ph can be different in various parts of the same garden.

Q: If my soil is sandy, too rocky, or has construction debris, how can I amend it?
A: This is a large topic suitable for a future Roundtable. Briefly, good soil has several qualities. It has a consistency that holds moisture long enough for roots to take in nutrients and water, but also drains well so that the roots do not sit in water and rot. It also contains beneficial organisms that aerate the soil and generate nutrients. Soil-amending additives include but are not limited to adding compost, dried manure, shredded leaves, and leaf mold.

Q: Why don't some of my new plants do well?
A: Plants that have been sitting in nursery pots may have tangled or girdled roots. Before planting, tease out the roots to undo this problem. Another issue can be that some nurseries may use soil that is very nutrient rich to get the fastest possible growth. When transferred to the soil in your garden, their size may remain stable for a while. Give them time and consider the adage: "first year sleep, second year creep, third year leap."

Q: How can I or my landscaper shred my leaves to use as mulch for my garden beds instead of blowing them into the woods or carting them away?
A: If your yard is very small, use a bag and mulcher attachment to your lawnmower. Or, invest in an electric leaf shredder. More on this next month…