

A Festival of Fall Flowers

By Zelpha Boyd, Gallatin Empire Garden Club Member

It wouldn't be fall without the Fall Crocus. It's blooming now and I can see it from my back window. The lavender-pink blooms are an inspiration and joy to even the most experienced gardener who has seen everything! Like a harbinger of spring—just a bit early.

The Autumn Crocus (*Colchicum Autumnale*) is a native of Europe, and belongs to the lily family. In early spring the bulb sends up lush foliage to a height of 12 to 18 inches. In late July the leaves all die in the summer heat. I put a marker near them so I remember not to dig there!

The plant resurrects itself in the cooler weather of September in its nymph, fairy-like clothing. Bulbs may be purchased from local sources that carry tulips and daffodils for fall planting.

Other flowers blooming in my garden right now are the wonderful bluish purple Fall Asters. They'll continue on until late fall—if I'm lucky and the weather holds, I'll have some for Thanksgiving. That goes for the Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) and the Gaillardia. They're bright yellow-oranges certainly add to the fall color season. The annuals that just won't quit are the Calendulas, petunias, sweet peas, and poppies.

These season extenders truly do gladden the heart of the fall gardener. Happy Fall everyone!