

WINTER INTEREST PLANTS



Redtwig Dogwood (*Cornus sericea, Alba, Sanguinea*)

Redtwig dogwood is a deciduous shrub known for its striking bright red branches in winter. It typically grows to a height of 5-9 feet and has green leaves during the growing season. In summer, it produces small clusters of white flowers, followed by white berries in late summer.

Planting Tips

- Choose a location with full sun to partial shade.
- Plant in well-drained soil and amend with organic matter to improve soil quality.
- Space the plants 4-6 feet apart for proper growth.
- Water regularly, especially during the first growing season, to establish the shrub.

Care

- Prune the older stems in late winter to encourage vibrant new growth.
- Fertilize in early spring with a balanced, slow-release fertilizer.
- Mulch around the base to conserve moisture and suppress weeds.

Coral Berry (*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*)

Coral berry is a deciduous shrub known for its pink to coral-colored berries that persist into winter. It typically reaches a height of 3-6 feet and produces small, pink, bell-shaped flowers in summer. The leaves are green during the growing season.

Planting Tips

- Plant in full sun to partial shade.
- Well-drained, loamy soil is ideal.
- Space the plants 3-5 feet apart.
- Regular watering is necessary, especially during dry spells.

Care

- Prune the shrub in late winter to maintain shape and improve air circulation.
- Apply a slow-release, balanced fertilizer in early spring.
- Mulch to help conserve soil moisture and suppress weeds.

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Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*)

Snowberry is a deciduous shrub that grows to a height of 3-6 feet. It produces small, pink to white, bell-shaped flowers in late spring, followed by white berries. The leaves are green during the growing season.

Planting Tips

- Full sun to light shade is suitable.
- Well-drained soil is preferred.
- Space the plants 3-4 feet apart.
- Water regularly during the establishment phase.

Care

- Prune to maintain shape and remove old growth in late winter.
- Apply a balanced, slow-release fertilizer in early spring.
- Mulch to retain soil moisture and reduce weed competition.

Beauty Berry (*Callicarpa americana*)

Beauty berry is a deciduous shrub with striking purple to magenta berries in fall. It reaches a height of 3-6 feet and produces small, pale pink to lavender flowers in summer. The leaves are green during the growing season.

Planting Tips

- Plant in full sun to light shade.
- Well-drained, moist soil is best.
- Space the plants 3-5 feet apart.
- Adequate water is required, especially during dry spells.

Care

- Prune in late winter to maintain shape and promote new growth.
- Apply a balanced, slow-release fertilizer in early spring.
- Mulch to conserve soil moisture and reduce weed competition.

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Ilex (Holly)

Ilex holly, which includes varieties like Rock Garden, Red Beauty, and Dwarf Pagoda, are popular evergreen shrubs known for their glossy green foliage and vibrant berries.

Planting Tips

- Choose the right location: Select a well-drained location that receives partial to full sunlight. Ilex hollies can tolerate some shade but tend to produce more berries and grow more densely in full sun.
- Soil preparation: Ensure the soil is well-draining, slightly acidic to neutral (pH 6.0-7.0), and rich in organic matter. If your soil is heavy clay or too sandy, consider amending it with compost to improve its texture and fertility.
- Planting hole: Dig a hole that is as deep as the root ball and 1.5 times as wide. Make sure the top of the root ball is level with the soil surface.
- Spacing: Space the plants at least 4-6 feet apart, depending on the specific variety, to allow for proper air circulation and growth.

Care

- Keep the soil consistently moist, especially during the first growing season. Water deeply when the top inch of soil is dry, but avoid overwatering, as hollies do not tolerate waterlogged conditions. Mulching around the base of the plant helps retain moisture.
- Fertilize your Ilex holly in early spring with a slow-release, balanced fertilizer. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for application rates. Avoid excessive nitrogen, as it can lead to excessive vegetative growth at the expense of berries.
- Prune your holly shrubs in late winter or early spring to maintain their desired shape and size. Remove dead or diseased branches and trim back leggy growth. Be cautious with pruning, as hollies tend to set their berries on older wood.
- Keep an eye out for pests like aphids, scale insects, and spider mites. These can be treated with insecticidal soaps or neem oil. Ilex hollies are generally resistant to most diseases, but proper care and good air circulation can prevent issues.
- Ilex hollies produce attractive berries in the fall and winter. These berries provide a valuable food source for birds and add to the ornamental value of the shrub. Red Beauty is known for its vibrant red berries.
- Ilex hollies are generally cold hardy, but during severe winters, you can protect them from desiccation by applying a layer of mulch around the base of the shrubs and wrapping the plants in burlap or other protective materials.
- Every few years, you can perform rejuvenation pruning by cutting back the shrub by up to one-third of its height. This encourages new growth and can help maintain a denser, more vibrant appearance.

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Gaultheria (*Wintergreen*)

Gaultheria, commonly known as wintergreen or checkerberry, is a group of plants that includes various species and varieties. These plants are often grown for their attractive evergreen foliage, colorful berries, and sometimes their aromatic leaves.

Planting Tips

- Gaultheria plants thrive in well-draining, acidic soil. Make sure the soil pH is between 4.5 and 6.0.
- Choose a location with partial to full shade. Gaultheria typically prefer dappled sunlight or shaded areas.
- Plant Gaultheria in the spring or fall when the weather is cooler and there's adequate moisture.
- Gaultheria plants thrive in well-draining, acidic soil. Make sure the soil pH is between 4.5 and 6.0.
- Choose a location with partial to full shade. Gaultheria typically prefer dappled sunlight or shaded areas.
- Dig a hole that is roughly the same depth as the root ball but two to three times wider. Space plants 12-18 inches apart, depending on the variety.
- Gently remove the plant from its container and place it in the hole. Backfill with soil and water thoroughly to help settle the soil.

Care

- Apply a 2-3 inch layer of organic mulch, such as pine straw, wood chips, or compost, around the base of the plant to help conserve moisture and maintain an acidic pH level.
- Gaultheria prefers consistent moisture but not waterlogged conditions. Water when the soil feels dry to the touch but avoid letting it become excessively dry or soggy.
- Pruning is generally not necessary for Gaultheria varieties. However, you can trim them to shape or remove dead or damaged branches in the late winter or early spring.
- Gaultheria plants don't typically require heavy fertilization. You can apply a slow-release, acid-loving plant fertilizer in the early spring, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Gaultheria varieties are hardy and can withstand cold temperatures. However, if you live in an area with harsh winters, you can protect the plants by mulching with an additional layer of straw or leaves in late fall.
- Gaultheria plants are generally not susceptible to many pests and diseases. However, they can sometimes be vulnerable to leaf spot or root rot if the soil drainage is poor. Ensure good soil drainage and promptly remove any affected leaves.
- You can propagate Gaultheria varieties by taking semi-ripe cuttings in late summer. Root the cuttings in a well-draining, acidic rooting medium.
- Some Gaultheria varieties produce edible berries. Harvest the berries when they are fully ripe. These can be used in jams, jellies, or enjoyed fresh.

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Heather (*Calluna, Erica*)

Calluna/Erica, commonly known as heather, is a low-growing, evergreen shrub that blooms with small, bell-shaped flowers in various colors, including white, pink, and purple. It typically reaches a height of 6-24 inches. Heather is known for its fine-textured, needle-like foliage.

Planting Tips

- Plant in well-drained, acidic soil.
- Full sun is ideal, but heather can tolerate light shade.
- Space the plants 12-18 inches apart.
- Ensure regular watering, especially during dry periods.

Care

- Prune after flowering to promote bushier growth.
- Apply a specialized acid-based fertilizer in early spring.
- Mulch to maintain soil moisture and control weeds.