

What to do in the Rockies

September

Shop for plants and ideas

Find unusual bulbs Check out Denver Botanic Gardens' annual fall plant and bulb sale (Sep 19; botanicgardens.org or 720/865-3500). Director of outreach Panayoti Kelaidis is especially excited about yellow-flowered *Iris bucharica*, a small rock-garden iris that blooms in April. You'll also see a large selection of fritillaries, *Iris reticulata*, and tulips.

Go to a bargain plant sale Through the end of this month, Timberline Gardens in Arvada, Colorado (timberlinegardens.com or 303/420-4060), sells a variety of overstock perennial flowers at \$1 a pot. Co-owner Kelly Grummons says his customers have built entire gardens with these bargain plants, which are shopworn but healthy.

Plant now

Grow an 'Allegheny' viburnum This statuesque, drought-tolerant shrub is a favorite of Harriett McMillan, horticulture specialist at Echter's Greenhouse & Garden Center in Arvada, Colorado. With white flowers, blue-black berries, and semi-evergreen foliage that turns burgundy in autumn, this shrub looks good in every season. 'Allegheny' grows in any soil and in sun or shade.

Plant garlic bulbs Hardneck varieties perform best in cold-winter climates, and a good source for them is Big John's Garden (bigjohnsgarden.com or 541/798-5941). It offers three families of hardneck

garlic: easy-peel rocamboles ('Killarney Red' and 'Spanish Roja'), satiny white porcelains ('Music' and 'Romanian Red'), and purple stripe ('Chesnok Red' and 'Metechi').

Sow spinach Seeds sown now will overwinter and be ready to harvest early next spring. After sowing, keep soil evenly moist until seeds sprout. Thin crowded seedlings and use them as you would any other micro green. Cover soil with a loose mulch of pine needles or straw to protect plants over the winter; water whenever the soil dries out.

Tend your plot

Dig and store summer bulbs After frost kills their tops, dig up tropical bulbs and tubers of calla, canna, dahlia, gladiolus, pineapple flower, and tuberous begonia. Store over the winter in peat moss-filled boxes in a cold place that does not freeze.

Eradicate bugs To dislodge pests from plants, Cheyenne Botanic Gardens' director Shane Smith recommends the Bug Blaster (thebugblaster.com or 949/493-3310). It attaches to a hose and shoots water 360°, making it easy to wash aphids, spider mites, and mealybugs off plants you plan to bring indoors for the winter.

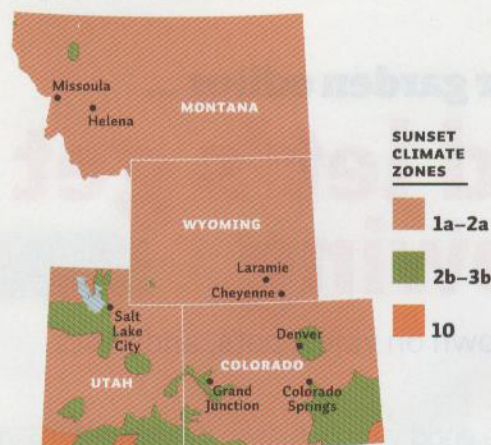
—MARCIA TATROE



COST
SAVER

Save cash by buying perennials like rudbeckia, salvia, and yarrow instead of annual blooms that need regular replacing.

WHAT'S YOUR ZONE?



Check out the *Sunset Western Garden Book* and our Plant Finder (sunset.com/plantfinder) for more about climate zones.



Plant a late-summer bloomer

Grow 'Frenzy' gaillardia for a bold splash of color just as other blooms begin to fade. The flower's fluted petals radiate red from the center and end in blasts of yellow for a ruffled look. This compact perennial reaches 1½ to 2 feet tall and wide. Plant it in a sunny spot with well-drained soil. Buy locally, or order from Bluestone Perennials (bluestoneperennials.com or 800/852-5243) or High Country Gardens (highcountrygardens.com or 800/925-9387). —JOHANNA SILVER