

Flowering Shrubs: More Bang For The Buck

(NAPSA)—Whether you use shrubs as foundation plantings, for a hedge or simply as a single specimen in your garden, you can get double the punch when you plant a flowering variety.

Shrubs are low-maintenance solutions in most yards. They fill larger amounts of space than perennials and can form the backbone of a garden's structure. Some easy-care flowering shrubs offer value-added impact.

- 'Henry's Garnet' sweetspire (*Itea virginica* 'Henry's Garnet') is an excellent replacement for the invasive old burning bush in your yard. Fragrant finger-length sprays of tiny white flowers adorn the shrub in spring, giving the appearance of a white waterfall. In autumn, brilliant red leaves make it a traffic stopper. Perhaps best of all, it's highly adaptable to most conditions. Reaching three to four feet tall and four to six feet wide, 'Henry's Garnet' prefers full sun but takes dappled shade. It likes moist soil but tolerates drought when established.

- For an unexpected jolt of blue flowers in late summer when you least expect them, plant *Caryopteris*, sometimes called blue mist, bluebeard or blue spirea. The cobalt-blue flowers of "First Choice" or the pure blue flowers of "Longwood Blue" attract butterflies and hummingbirds. For a contrast between foliage and flowers, look for "Sunshine Blue" with yellow-chartreuse leaves and amethyst-blue flowers. Plant blue mist in full sun or in afternoon shade. Most reach three to five feet tall and two to four feet wide.

- Old-fashioned weigelas—dependable growers with showy, trumpet-shaped spring flowers in pink, red, white or yellow—have gotten a makeover in recent years, offering many choices of leaf color. Selections with burgundy, butter-



Freshen up your garden with pink and white peppermint-striped hydrangeas.

yellow and variegated green and white or green and yellow leaves can perk up your yard even when the shrub isn't in bloom (some will rebloom in late summer or fall). Weigelas come in a wide range of sizes, from about a foot tall to six to eight feet, and are pretty hardy.

- For the longest-flowering shrub, consider a hydrangea. Beautiful mophead hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) now come in reblooming varieties. Hydrangeas in the Forever & Ever series bloom on both old and new wood. Choose from pink (blue in acidic soils) or white flowers or the cute bicolor pink and white of "Peppermint" for a color boost that begins in early summer and lasts until frost. Even then, you can leave the dried flowers on the shrub for winter interest. The new Summer Lace variety grows with a flat-top lacecap form. Grow them in morning sun and afternoon shade in well-drained, organic-rich soil. Most of these hardy plants reach three to four feet tall.

You can locate retailers carrying these plants or get more information online at www.foreverhydrangea.com and on Facebook.