



**CEDAR RIVER GARDEN CENTER**

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**Surprise sales continue! Stop in  
and see for yourself!**

Photo Credit: Faye Dykema

## **Dress for the Weather Part Two**

**Justin Myers**

In the first article, "Dress for the Weather Part 1" we covered plants that can tolerate moisture laden areas. We are now ready for tough drought tolerant plants. Iowa is no desert by any means, but we can go through some times of drought. Without further ado, I bring you some of my favorite drought tolerant trees and shrubs.

### **Drought Tolerant Trees**

**Ponderosa Pine:** A majestic and strong pine hardy to zone 3. The Ponderosa Pine can grow up to 100 feet tall. The deep green needles are almost a foot long. What make the Ponderosa so

drought tolerant? Well, the secret is the deep tap root. It doesn't need much nitrogen or phosphorus to grow which allows it to take root in some less than perfect soils.

### **Kentucky Coffeetree:**

Native to the central states from Pennsylvania to Nebraska and from Minnesota to Oklahoma. At maturity, the Kentucky Coffeetree is picturesque. It is a very versatile tree handling cool, heat, drought, and salt with ease. There are two seedless varieties, 'Decaf' and 'Espresso' both give great dappled shade and due to their superior branching, hold up better to the wind. 'Espresso' has more of a vase like form similar to an Elm. 'Decaf' is more of a rounded space. The Kentucky Coffeetree get about 50 feet tall and 40 feet wide and is cold hardy to zone 4.

### **Sycamore:**

A regal giant growing nearly 100 feet tall and 75 feet wide and hardy to zone 4. It is the fastest growing tree on this list putting on 2 feet of growth or more a year. Massive leaves offer remarkable shade and has exfoliating bark in shades of cream, light green, and brown. Sycamore trees are among the oldest species of tree on earth. Although a new notable variety is the 'Silverwood.'

### **White Oak:**

Yet another heavy hitter on the roster. Growing 75 feet tall and wide it may not be the largest on the list, but it may be one of the longest lived. There is said to be a stand of 400-year-old white oak in Pammel Park in Madison County, Iowa. All oaks produce acorns, but the white oak needs to reach a maturity of 25 to 50 year before they start to produce. The white oak is very hardy to zone 3 and drought tolerant once established.

### **Drought Tolerant Shrubs**

#### **Potentilla:**

Hot and dry? Hot and humid? Potentilla can handle it all, plus its hardy to -40° F! In full sun, the blooms come wave after wave all

summer long. Potentilla is a surefire plant for well-drained soil it also comes in a multitude of colors. Yellow might be the old faithful, but did you know potentilla comes in white, pink, orange, and a soft reddish tone. Most Potentilla are small and compact, reaching 2 to 3 feet tall and wide. Making them easy to slip into any landscape. Prune in the spring to keep them fresh all season.

### **Flowering Quince:**

One of the first shrubs to adorn its branches with flowers in the spring the quince can really put on a show. Most of the old fashion quince and have nasty thorns, but a series called Double Take should change the way you look at Quince. The Double Take Quince bloom in four colors; orange, pink, peach, and scarlet red. Some of the old fashion quince can grow up to 10 feet tall the Double Take's cap out around 5 feet tall and wide making it a nice background shrub. Flowering quince is a Zone 5 shrub great for the sunny south side of the house.

### **Cotoneaster:**

This plant may have the most varieties out of all the shrubs highlighted. In the Cotoneaster family, there are hedge, creeping, cranberry, rock, and spreading options. They are all hardy to Zone 4 the hedge cotoneaster is not as common, but 'Autumn Inferno' may just change that with intense fall color of red to purple and bright red berries that persist into winter. 'Cranberry' and 'Tom Thumb' Cotoneaster which is a creeping variety best used as a groundcover. All cotoneasters and great for water wise landscaping and rock gardens.

### **Barberry:**

When you look past the thorns of the Barberry you can see the true beauty. Barberry come in many different color shades and sizes. Some Barberry have a more whimsical look with arched branches like 'Emerald Carousel' and 'Royal Cloak.' If you need a mounded variety, 'Golden Ruby' and 'Limoncello' are columnar 'Helmond Pillar' and 'Orange Rocket.' The color pallet of a

Barberry varies from shades of green to yellow, orange, red, pink, and purple. Barberry are tough as nails and are cold hardy to zone 4 . Let me take you on a journey through time. In 2016 we flooded the five Emerald Carousel Barberry that were planted in 2015 were under water for 4 to 5 days. They are still alive today and show off with their bright yellow flowers every late spring. How about that for a tough shrub?

I want to thank you all for traveling with me while we "dress your yard for the weather." This was a quick highlight and a limited list on just a few plants that are tolerant of drought. There are so many more plants to learn about. If you have questions, or would like to learn about other options, give me a ring on the phone.



*Sycamore bark is quiet unusual.*



*A beautifully majestic White Oak.*



*Double Take Orange Flowering Quince*



*The red berries of a Cotoneaster are beautiful, but poisonous.*



*Red Ace Potentilla from Monrovia is a colorful example of a new take on an old shrub.*

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## **It's a Go for Garlic**

A great time to plant garlic close in our area is close to Columbus

Day, but anytime now through November will work. Separate the cloves and keep the smallest ones for kitchen use. Plant the larger bulbs pointy side up with the skin intact. Cover with 2 inches of soil and apply a nice layer of pine needles or straw to help settle them in. You may see the scape, or the curly flower stem, pop through the mulch yet this fall. That is fine. It may get a little frost damage, but it will survive.

You can apply a granular fertilizer in the spring to give them a good boost. They don't share well with others, so be sure to keep weeds away from your planting space. Harvest in our area is typically June or July. The garlic scapes can be enjoyed for cooking once their size is around 10".

Which type is best for you?

**Hardneck Garlic:**

- \* Stores 4-6 months
- \* Produces "Scapes"
- \* Peels easier
- \* Large cloves

**Softneck Garlic:**

- \* Stores 9-12 months
- \* Produces many smaller more mild flavored cloves
- \* Does not produce "Scape," best type for braiding
- \* Kind traditionally found in grocery stores

Can I plant the garlic I buy in the store? We don't suggest trying it unless you know for sure the garlic was grown locally. This is important because you need to be able to trust the cold hardiness of the grown clove. Is it meant for our area? Plus, you may want to ask your local grocer if the cloves have been treated to prevent sprouting.

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## The Nitty Gritty Details of Sales:

- Weekly sales do not apply to previously purchased plant material.
  - Sale voids the tree/shrub guarantee.
  - Planting price of trees and shrubs is off the original price of plant material.
  - Perennials are never guaranteed.
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