

October 2008

## Plants of the Month

### Savoy cabbage

*Brassica oleracea*

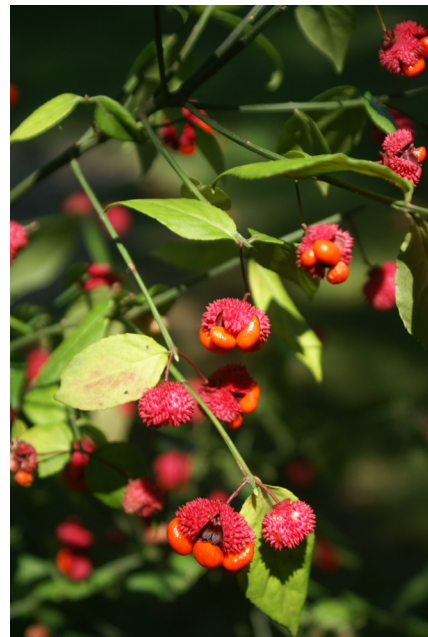
Soup season is here, along with dark Savoy cabbage to liven up your minestrone. Mild tasting Savoy produces gorgeous crinkled leaves in a loose head. Growing Savoy in fall can be the most satisfactory of achievements as you cheat winter. Start seedlings indoors about 3 weeks before setting out July 10 to August 20. For fall planting, select fast maturing varieties. Cabbage likes full sun and rich soil, moist but not soggy, with a pH of 5.5 to 7. Under light mulch, cabbage may overwinter. Of course, spring planting is fine, too. 'Pac-Man' variety works well in small gardens



### Hearts-a-Burstin'

*Euonymus americanus*

Hearts soar when the magenta and orange seed pods of this native euonymus pop open. Eye-catching and unusual in home gardens, most of the year the 3-6 foot green four-sided stems are unremarkable with a sparse growth habit. When its small greenish spring flowers turn into ¾" warty pods in early fall, they split open, dangling 3-5 shiny seeds. Place Hearts-a-Burstin' where you will see it close-up. Groups increase impact. This deciduous forest likes part to full shade. Not invasive like its Asian relatives, it increases by suckers or seed. Hardy to zone 6a.



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## **Aster, Michaelmas Daisy**

### ***Aster* family**

Aster is a large genus of perennial flowers which includes our Maryland native, New England aster (*novae angliae*). Bloom times vary from end of summer to as late as December in the case of *novae angliae* 'Fanny.' Daisy-like blooms in purples, pinks or white grow from 6 inches to 8 feet tall. Plant in moist, well-drained soil of moderate fertility in full sun. Pinch clumps in early summer to promote strong stems and divide every few years. Popular asters include *aster x frikartii* 'Monch', a 2-3 foot lavender blue and compact *novi-belgii* 'Purple Dome', a New York aster.



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## **Red Switch Grass 'Shenandoah'**

### ***Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah'**

Switch Grass 'Shenandoah' graces the late summer garden with rich burgundy color. Green foliage emerges in the spring and by mid-summer begins to take on red tones. Numerous finely-textured flower panicles float over the grass blades like a wispy cloud and stay attractive even when frost turns blades a tawny gold. Switch grass is a native grass and not invasive. At approximately 4 feet and drought tolerant, it makes a lively addition to a perennial bed, planted in masses, or as a specimen plant. Little maintenance is required; cut them back once a year in early spring.



**Have a pest or gardening question?**

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