

Liquid gold

Liquidambar styraciflua are stars of the autumn show with elegant, maple-like leaves that evolve to golden yellow, fiery red and deep purple. Scarletting, dwarf 'Gum Ball' and dazzling yellow 'Schock's Gold' feature in Wisley's arboretum; there is also a fine specimen by the Pagoda in Seven Acres.

RHS / JAMES RUDONI

WISLEY'S AUTUMN GLORY

As nights draw in, some plants preparing for winter dormancy produce a dramatic colour display. At RHS Garden Wisley in Surrey, many are casting off leaves or ending their annual cycle with tasty fruit, while for some the reproductive year is surging ahead >>

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Jewel-like fruits ▶

In addition to a vast orchard of 730 different apples, Wisley also contains more than 70 crab apple cultivars. Bursting with jewel-like fruits, from radiant red *Malus* 'Crittenden' (right) to zingy yellow *M. x zumi* 'Golden Hornet' (below), they are creating focal points in various parts of the garden.



RHS / PHILIPPA GIBSON



RHS / SIMON GARRUTT

Colourful carpets ▶

Colchicum and *Cyclamen hederifolium* produce their beautiful spring-like flowers in autumn. In the Bowes-Lyon Rose Garden, carpets of crocus-like *Colchicum autumnale* flowers (right) are blooming under the trees. Their purple goblet-shaped flowers emerge on lengthy stems long after their spring leaves have disappeared.

Cyclamen hederifolium (far right) starts flowering in late summer and continues right into November. Planted en masse in Howard's Field, these tuberous perennials reach only 12.5cm (5in) tall. They have five pink twisted petals with dark markings at the base, and striking ivy-like green leaves attractively patterned with silver.



RHS / MIKE SLEIGHT



RHS / CLIVE NICHOLS

◀ Seedheads and grasses

The ever-evolving Glasshouse Landscape (left), designed by Tom Stuart-Smith in 2007, comes into its own in autumn. In the Glasshouse Borders (below), originally designed by Piet Oudolf, grasses such as *Calamagrostis brachytricha* and *Pennisetum macrourum* provide feathery movement against the ornamental structure of the seedheads of *Eryngium giganteum* 'Silver Ghost', *Rudbeckia maxima* and *Phlomis tuberosa* 'Amazone'. In addition to its visual appeal, the planting also provides food for seed-eating birds, as well as overwintering habitats for ladybirds and other insects.



RHS / JAMES RUDONI

'In addition to its visual appeal, the planting provides food for seed-eating birds'

Wisley in autumn

There are still many attractions and highlights to see at RHS Garden Wisley through autumn and beyond.

- ❖ **Chrysanthemums indoors and out:** see Charm and Cascade chrysanthemums on display in the Glasshouse Gallery until 27 November. On the Trials Field the Plant Trial of potted chrysanthemum cultivars is at its peak.
- ❖ **Winter-blooming camellias:** look for flowers unfurling on many *Camellia sasanqua* (right) outdoors. (See also p83.)

Free Day Friday

On Friday 4 November all four RHS Gardens open their gates to everyone free of charge. See Diary, p86.

❖ **RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB; www.rhs.org.uk/wisley; Open:** Mon-Fri 10am-4.30pm, Sat-Sun 9am-4.30pm; last entry 1hr before closing.



RHS

▲ Glasshouse displays

Dormant throughout summer, *Nerine sarniensis* produce their eye-catching flowers in autumn. Cultivars range in colour from vibrant red, pink and salmon to cream, white and purple. These semi-tender South African bulbs are widely considered to be one of the most beautiful *Nerine* species (there are 24 in total), and you can enjoy the spectacle of between 50 and 70 cultivars displayed in The Glasshouse at Wisley until 1 November (or longer if they are still at their best). A display of chrysanthemums follows (see right).



RHS / PHILIPPA GIBSON



RHS / CAROL SHEPPARD



RHS / TIM SANDALL