Growing Callicarpa (Beauty Berry)

**Latin Name Pronunciation:** kal-ih-kar'puh

Callicarpa is one of the best fruiting shrubs for mid-fall color; its shiny lavender berries are a great attraction in the landscape at a time when many plants are winding down their display. Plants produce small pink flowers in August, but it's the berries that produce the big show. 'Early Amethyst' sets fruit in early September here in Connecticut, well ahead of the species.

Callicarpa are fast growers, spreading about as wide as they are tall. Fruit production is better if several are planted together. Plants are small enough to fit easily into a perennial or mixed border, perhaps near Ornamental Grasses, Perovskia, and late-blooming Rudbeckias for a satisfying late-season display.

Plants prefer full sun and tolerate partial shade, and average, well-drained soil. Once established, Callicarpa is drought tolerant. No serious pest or disease problems. Seldom requires fertilizer.

Because plants flower on the current season's growth, they can be pruned hard (to as low as 4–6”) in early spring. Plants will be smaller than they would be if left unpruned, but their stems will be lined from head to toe (rather than just at the tips of the branches) with clusters of berries.