ven the most well-designed gardens experience days without flowers as they transition from one season to the next. Late summer and early fall often represent a challenge as summer-blooming plants begin to fade and fall bloomers have not quite reached their peak. Fall-blooming anemones stand out as harbingers to summer's end, welcoming shorter days and cooler weather.

Anemone boasts a rich garden heritage, dating back to the 17th century and likely earlier. European plant explorers brought back exciting news from Japan, which included the existence of Anemone japonica, or Japanese anemone. They had no way of knowing that this plant, now correctly named A. hupehensis var. japonica, was a native of China and had naturalized in Japan after escaping from gardens there. Because of this history, species such as A. hupehensis, A. ×hybrida and A. tomentosa are all commonly called Japanese anemones, although fall-blooming anemone and windflower are also common names. In 1947, Bowles and Stearn published The History of Anemone japonica in the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society, which, to this day, represents the most comprehensive commentary on the origin and naming of fall-blooming anemones.

Fall-blooming anemones consist of the species *Anemone hupehensis*, *A.* ×hybrida, *A. tomentosa* and *A. vitifolia*, and their subspecies and cultivars. Along with *A. hupehensis*, *A.* ×hybrida is the most recognizable of the fall bloomers and was developed in Britain from a cross between *A. vitifolia* (entire leaves and single flowers) and *A. hupehensis* var. *japonica* (subdivided leaves and semi-double to double flowers). The majority of current cultivars are attributed to *A. hupehensis* and *A.* ×hybrida.

The dark green leaves of fall-blooming anemones are usually three-parted and softly pubescent beneath. They have clumping habits but spread by rhizomes once established in the garden. Most are less than 3 feet tall, but some cultivars can reach 5 feet when in bloom. Fall-blooming anemones are also known as windflowers because their 2- to 3-inch flowers are held on wiry stems that sway in the breeze. Flower colors range from pure white to dark pink and purple, and flower forms vary from single, with four to six broad tepals, to semi-double and double with 30 or more tepals. The tepals of fall-blooming anemones are colorful, petal-like structures that take the place of both sepals and petals. Similar structures make up the flowers of lilies and tulips, as well as other members of the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae) such as J30063 Tw(the but28 I1The9h 5 feetk51 Tc-0.006

Observations

Twenty-six fall-blooming anemones were examined throughout the trial period. Plants encountered variable environmental conditions including early fall frosts, drought, torrential rains, and extreme heat and cold—conditions indicative of weather in Chicago and the Upper Midwest. As the group matured and spread, competition among plants also became a problem. The *Anemone* varieties under study met these challenges with varying success as indicated by the final ratings in Table 1.

Although evaluations are conducted using up to 28 descriptors, four main criteria determined overall ratings: plant health; habit quality; length of bloom period; and winter hardiness. Each criterion was scored excellent to very poor and given equal weight toward the overall rating. In order to receive an excellent overall rating, a variety would need to

receive excellent marks for each of the four criteria. None of the varieties in the current trial received excellent ratings in all four criteria; therefore, no variety was given a perfect 5-star overall rating.

Plant health was generally determined by the condition of the leaves throughout the growing season. The appearance of weak growth, wilted leaves, or foliar pests or diseases could negatively impact this rating. To receive a good health score, plants were expected to maintain clean, healthy foliage without signs of damage. An excellent rating was assigned if plants appeared to be at optimum health and exhibited extraordinary vigorous growth.

Habit quality is an important factor in evaluating plants in the program, and it was especially significant in the case of *Anemone*. The majority of the foliage is located on the bottom half of the plant and the flowers are suspended on long stalks, or scapes. While in bloom, it can be a challenge for the long flower stems to remain upright, especially in wind or rain. For this reason, to receive a good habit

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gardens. From 1998 to 2003 the average first frost at the Chicago Botanic Garden occurred on October 10, with the earliest on October 1, 2003 and the latest on October 20, 1999. Frosts at this time of year have the potential to adversely affect flowering by either reducing flower production or ending flowering altogether. A number of Anemone varieties routinely bloomed well past first frost without any observable reduction in flower production. These included A. hupehensis 'Hadspen Abundance', A. hupehensis 'Splendens', A. hupehensis 'Superba', A. hupehensis var. japonica 'Bressingham Glow', A. hupehensis var. japonica 'Pamina', A. hupehensis var. japonica 'Prinz Heinrich', A. ×hybrida 'Alice', A. ×hybrida 'Andrea Atkinson', A. ×hybrida 'Honorine Jobert', A. ×hybrida 'Königin Charlotte', A. ×hybrida 'Max Vogel', Α.