The shorter days and longer nights of the fall season slow the production of chlorophyll in plants which gives leaves their green color. As the production of chlorophyll slows, the green color in leaves disintegrates and the leaf pigments that remain turn some trees gold, red, yellow or orange. In the native landscapes, we notice Texas Red Oak stunning against the blue sky. Sumac is dazzling red while Texas Ash, Chinaberry and Cedar Elm all display bright yellow fall color, and the red, orange and crimson colors of Chinese Pistachio and Sweet gum absolutely shout fall is here. Adapted plants like Bradford Pear are brilliant red to burgundy, and Crape Myrtle can be yellow, red, rust, gold or burgundy depending on the variety. If you are inspired by the beautiful fall color this year, you may want to add a tree to your landscape. Although a tree may be planted at any time of year, trees planted in the fall will have all winter to establish themselves and have an advantage over trees planted at other times. When planting your tree, dig the hole twice as wide, but no deeper than the container it is in. Do not enrich the soil; just use the native soil that came out of the hole to fill in empty spaces. Remember to water the tree in the container before planting. Remember to mulch and water thoroughly after planting and then weekly until it is established, even through the winter.

Trees aren't our only source of fall color; the cooler nighttime temperatures spur roses and many perennials like Salvia Greggii, Zexmenia, and Mealy Blue Sage back into bloom. Four Nerve Daisy and Blackfoot Daisy with their non-stop blooms and Copper Canyon Daisy, Mexican Bush Sage, Mexican Mint Marigold, Lavender, and White Mist Flower are all reliable fall bloomers. Garden mums, available in colors of yellow, gold, bronze, green and white, and other perennials like Asters, Caryopteris, Autumn Joy Sedum, Pineapple Sage, Turk's Cap and Mountain Sage will bloom colorfully each fall. Shrubs you will see blooming until frost are Thyrallis, Aloysia, Esperanza, and Flowering Senna.

In the photo: Shummard Red Maple, a native of east Texas, displays stunning red leaves in a Temple neighborhood. If you plant this tree, be prepared to provide the moisture and acid soil conditions necessary for it to thrive in Bell County.