



BETWEEN THE ROWS
WENDY SCHMIDT

A walk in the city can spur ideas

This week I drove to Portland and beyond. What I was actually looking for in Portland was an entire block or so of gigantic ginkgo trees that must be over 100 years old which I enjoyed when I lived in Portland many years ago. The ginkgos are located on one of the park blocks. I know they are still there, but I failed to locate them — however, I had a nice long walk and saw a lot of trees, shrubs, and flowers.

It is a good thing to get away every once in a while to look at other landscapes. In this way, you can gather ideas and perspective in thinking about designs for your home gardens. You can perhaps fall in love with certain native foliage or see shrubs in autumn color. Trees you have not noticed are brought to the front of your mind by seeing them in a new setting.

The dogwood family is large and has attractive leaves with prominent parallel veining. There are many shrubs in that family and their use in landscaping did not escape me in my recent trip when I did the walk in downtown Portland. (There are quite a few planted around La Grande as well).

- Dogwood (Cornus species) are deciduous shrubs or trees. All offer attractive foliage and flowers; some are spectacular in fruit and winter bark. They need ample water and good drainage.

- Tatarian Dogwood — C. alba. Shrub. Its bare, blood-red twigs are colorful against snow. Upright to 10 feet high, wide-spreading, eventually producing thicket of many stems. Small, fragrant, creamy white flowers in 1- to 2-inch flattish clusters in April, May. Bluish-white to whitish small fruits. Best in shade.

- Siberian Dogwood — C. a. 'Sibirica.' Less rampant than species; grows to about 7 feet high with 5-foot spread. Gleaming coral red branches in winter. Tolerates shade. In both C. alba and C. a. "Sibirica," new wood is brightest; cut back in spring (after flowering) to force new growth.

- Bunchberry — C. canadensis. Deciduous carpet plant. Native northern California to Alaska and eastward. It's difficult to believe this 6-inch to 9-inch perennial is related to dogwoods when you see it under trees by lakes and streams in the Northwest. Creeping rootstocks send up stems topped by whorls of 4 to 6 oval or roundish leaves. Leaves deep green turn yellow in fall, die back in winter. Clusters of tiny flowers are followed by shiny, bright red fruit in August and September. You can establish it by transplanting it with a piece of rotten log with bark attached. Excellent companion plant for rhododendrons, ferns, trilliums, and lilies.

- Eastern Dogwood — C. florida. Native to eastern U.S. To 20 feet high. The most commonly planted flowering dogwood. Generally performs best in high shade; screen from western sun. In its horizontal branching pattern, it resembles our western native C. nuttallii, but gray twigs at branch ends tend to be upright. It usually has a shorter trunk. Small flower clusters are surrounded by 4 roundish, 2- to 4-inch inch-wide white bracts with notched tips. Bracts form in autumn; in harsh, dry winters, tips may wither, preventing inflorescence from opening fully. Flowers almost cover the tree in May before the leaves expand. Green leaves turn red in the fall. Clusters of small, oval, scarlet fruit last into winter or until birds eat them. Eastern dogwood are often planted because of their pink varieties.

- Kousa Dogwood — C. Kousa. Big shrub or small tree. Native to Japan and Korea. Later blooming (June and July) than other dogwoods. Multi-stemmed small tree to 20 feet or higher. Slender, white, narrow, pointed bracts surround the flower cluster.

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Beyond Lattes — Pumpkin Spice Recipes



Pumpkin blonde bars

Christian Gooden/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

PUMPKIN POSSIBILITIES

By **Daniel Neman**
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Pumpkin Spice was always my least favorite Spice Girl, coming in even after Sugar and Spice.

There is something about that pumpkin-spice combination of cinnamon, ginger, cloves and nutmeg that offends my delicate sensibilities, and it is not the flavors themselves. The actual taste is wonderful.

The problem is its ubiquity. First there was pie, which is how Nature intended pumpkin spice to be used. But then came pumpkin spice lattes, pumpkin spice Greek yogurt, pumpkin spice cereal, pumpkin spice (and sage) ravioli and even pumpkin spice dental floss.

My cousin, who lives near Washington, D.C., swears she saw a sign there for pumpkin spice pizza.

Clearly, pumpkin spice is not going to go away on its own. And so, like other things that will not go away on their own — appendicitis, leprosy, the Tanganyika Laughter Epidemic of 1962 — it has to be dealt with.

So I dealt with it by making a handful of dishes that are actually good uses of pumpkin spice. I also made my own pumpkin spice mix to use in most of these recipes, because it was ridiculously easy to do.

I started off with a savory dish, figuring that everything else would be dessert. But when you are dealing with pumpkin spice, even something savory can turn out to be a little sweet.

Sweet Spiced Butternut Squash Soup is a clever idea. It takes regular butternut squash soup, which is plenty easy to make, and adds two complementary ingredients: maple syrup and pumpkin spice.

Maple syrup makes sense, of course, because it is so often added to roasted butternut squash to bring out an irresistibly nutty taste. And not enough is used to make it cloying; just two tablespoons for four to six generous servings.

But the pumpkin spice is a flash of genius. It doesn't take much — just half a teaspoon for up to six servings — to put an autumnal sheen to the soup. It is thick, hearty and luscious.

Perhaps the ultimate expression of pumpkin spice that is not a pie or a latte is a cheesecake. I started with a Paula Deen recipe that was already good, eliminated some of the butter from the crust (because, you know, it's Paula Deen, and the butter literally leaks out of the pan if you use the amount she calls for) and added a bunch of cheesecake tricks to make it great.

Even experienced cooks can sometimes have problems with their cheesecakes either cracking on top or being lumpy inside. That's where the cheesecake tricks come in.

To keep the top from cracking, you should cook the cheesecake in a water bath; in other words, the cheesecake pan should be placed inside another pan that has boiling water in it (it's easiest to put the one pan inside the other before you add the water). To keep water from



PSL Jell-O shots

Christian Gooden/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

seeping into the bottom of the springform pan, line the outside with aluminum foil.

To make a cheesecake nice and smooth, the cream cheese, sour cream and eggs have to be at room temperature, which means leaving them out for four to five hours. The eggs should be added last and stirred in by hand just until it is combined.

My cheesecake came out perfect — creamy and incredibly rich. And the pumpkin spice flavor, which in this recipe is created with cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves, somehow made it better with a touch of seasonal delight.

The thought occurred to me to make a spice cake with pumpkin spice, but I decided against it as being too obvious. So instead I went the brownie route and made Pumpkin Blondie Bars.

The blondie part is straightforward; it is

not much different from a regular blondie, but with pumpkin puree and a dash of pumpkin spice. Where these bars really shine is in the topping, a swirled mixture of a cream cheese topping and the blondie dough.

This is not an overly sweet dessert. It does not have too much pumpkin, it does not have too much pumpkin spice, it does not have too much cream cheese, if there could possibly be such a thing. It is just right.

Obviously, the pumpkin spice was beginning to get to me, because I decided also to make PSL Jell-O Shots. That's PSL, as in pumpkin spice latte, and yes, I said Jell-O shots.

I'll admit, I was a little surprised that they turned out to be so good. But when you think about it, why wouldn't they be?

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