

Creating Colorful Combinations

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Creating Balance and Visual Interest in Plant Combinations: Combining plants with various colors, textures, and forms is one of the easiest ways to create eye-catching plantings with balance and visual interest.

- **Color**

- Annuals can provide nearly every color on the color wheel
- Great for setting a mood
 - **Bright/Hot Colors:** cheerful, energetic, tropical
 - **Cool Colors:** calming, peaceful
 - **Pastels:** soft, romantic
 - **Black & White:** elegant, formal
- **Complimentary Colors:**
 - Across from one another on the color wheel
 - Provides the most contrast
- **Analogous Colors:**
 - Two or more neighboring colors on the color wheel
 - Often found in nature
 - Harmonious and calming
- **Triadic Colors:**
 - Colors connected by a triangle on the color wheel
 - Does not have to be an equilateral triangle
 - Can be very vibrant!
- **Monotone Colors:**
 - Different shades of the same color
 - Sounds boring, but can be quite interesting by using various shades, textures, and sizes.
- **Black & White:**
 - Compliments every color combination
 - Black, dark purple, and burgundy
 - Great way to add contrast
 - White, cream, and variegated plants
 - Great way to “soften” bold combinations
- **Green:**
 - Green goes with everything
 - Add interest by using different textures, different shades of green, or variegated foliage
- **Container Color:** the color of your container/hanging basket/window box is definitely something to consider
- **Garden Element Color:** garden elements like fences, fountains, birdbaths, trellises, etc., can also impact your color palette

- **Texture**
 - Texture can be created from foliage and/or flowers
 - Mix different textures to create contrast and interest
 - Smooth, fine, and coarse
 - Succulents are a great texture-rich trend right now

- **Form (A.K.A. Plant Habit)**
 - Combine different plant habits to create interest
 - Upright, Weeping, Trailing, Vining
 - The terms thrillers, fillers, and spillers are often used

 - **Thrillers:** vertical elements
 - You don't always need Thrillers
 - Formal flower beds often lack Thrillers
 - **Examples:** Ornamental Corn, Canna, Amaranth, Ornamental Millet, Ornamental Grasses, Cyperus, Dracaena, Elephant Ear, Castor Bean

 - **Fillers:** horizontal, space-filling elements
 - Many Fillers and Spillers are interchangeable.
 - Often, plants will start out as Fillers and turn into Spillers (or groundcovers in ground beds) towards the end of the growing season.
 - **Examples:** Angelonia, Petunia, Begonia, Calibrachoa, Ornamental Pepper, Kale, Swiss Chard, Parsley, Coleus, Cleome, New Guinea Impatiens, Alternanthera, Oxalis

 - **Spillers:** cascading elements
 - Many Spillers act as Fillers early on in the growing season.
 - In ground beds, Spillers can be thought of as ground-covers, or carpet-like elements.
 - **Examples:** Alyssum, Verbena, Love Lies Bleeding, Winged Begonia, Fuchsia, Sweet Potato Vine, Lophospermum, Ornamental Oregano

- **How to Choose Plant Combinations**
 - Gather inspiration from:
 - Floral arrangements
 - Fabric or Artwork
 - Pinterest
 - Seed Catalogues and Magazines
 - Garden Visits
 - Pick one "inspiration plant" and incorporate it into many different color schemes
 - Or, work in reverse. Pick your color scheme and then find plants to match
 - If in doubt, add shades of green, white, or black to any color combination
 - For the most visual interest, select plants that vary in color, texture, and form
 - Keep it simple, stick to 2 or 3 plant varieties and build complexity from there
 - Or, plant multiple colors of one plant type (e.g. a collection of oxalis, begonia, or petunia)