

4 Seasons of Beauty in the Garden

How thinking like a florist can give insight to creating 4-season appeal in the garden, and make it a source for lovely and colorful cut botanical arrangements every day of the year.

How do make your garden beautiful in every season? Have something to look at that offers interest in every season. What can provide interest?

Foliage color & texture

Flowers, berries

Bark color & texture

Seedheads

Accept death as a lovely phase as well

Consider every layer of the garden:

Tree

Shrubs big & little

Perennial/Annual/floral

Groundcover

In every pocket, for every layer of the garden, each season should be represented, either by plants with multiple seasons of interest, or by making sure that for each category you choose a plant with interest for each season.

Consider the components of a floral design:

Foliage – this can set the color tone of the arrangement, and can offer lots of texture

Flowers (maybe?) – big faces to carry the interest

Branches – shapes, fruits, cones

Spillers – something to drip over the lip of the vase, like a vine or a grass

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Great Garden Plants for Winter (Cutting) Interest

Needle Evergreens – great for texture and color:

Thuja/Arborvitae & Cedar – golden & variegated varieties, esp.

Cryptomeria – ‘Sekkan Sugi’, ‘Black Dragon’, japonica ‘Elegans’, ‘Curly Mops’ and more

Juniper – blues, yellows, fruited, contorted – lots to choose from

Pine – esp. curly, golden & blue types

Cedrus – atlantica ‘Glauc’ (BIG tree)

Chamaecyparis – ‘Fernspray’, ‘Verdoni’ and more

Cupressus arizonica var. glauca – Blue Ice Arizona Cypress

Herbs – Rosemary, Sage, Artemesia

Broadleaf Evergreens - gloss, contrast, also color:

Elaeagnus ‘Fruitlandii’ (silver) or variegated types like ‘Gilt Edge’ etc

Ilex aquifolium – variegated & if you already have the regular one it is better to cut and trash the berries

Vaccinium ovatum/Huckleberry

Salal

Abelia – ‘Kaleidoscope’, the ‘Anniversary’ series, I’ve found ‘Confetti’ to be a bit weak

Nandina

Magnolia grandiflora (that cinnamon underside!)

Rhododendrons – the yaku hybrids with silvery white felty indumentum; others with brown

Leucothoe ‘Rainbow’, ‘Scarletta’

Choisya ‘Sundance’

Pieris – flowers & foliage, so many!

Daphne

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Stems with color & character:

Salix alba tortuosa/Curly Willow (maybe don't plant; disease issues)

Salix melanostachys & chaenomeloides – black & silver pussywillows

Corokia

Corylus avellana 'Red Majestic'/Filbert

Corylus avellana 'Contorta' – Henry Lauder's walking stick

Cornus 'Midwinter Fire' (orangey coral apricot), 'Elegantissima' (red), 'Flaviramea' (yellow)

Acer davidii – Paperbark Maple

Prunus serrula – Paperbark Cherry

Mossy Alder

Cones, Berries/Seeds & Pods:

Symphoricarpos/Snowberry – both 'Alba' and 'Hancock' (dark pink)

Callicarpa/Beautyberry esp 'Profusion' (purple)

Ilex/Holly – Don't plant invasives! Just forage! for the berried types (females) as they are invasive; purchase the males.

Rosehips

Crataegus/Hawthorne – 'Washington' and lavellei are some of my favorites

Malus/Crabapple, so many – I love 'Golden Raindrops' and 'Dolgo'; watch for disease resistant types

Castanea/Chesnut – big spikey pods; cut green/unripe (really more of a fall think)

Viburnum – the hard berried types (not stinky opulus) – davidii, tinus, 'Winterthur' – which also flower early

Winter Flowers!! Good for the gardener's psyche and the bees/pollinators as well!

Osmanthus

Sarcococca

Abeliophyllum distyllum

Viburnum 'Dawn'

Azara, esp. microphylla

Camellia sasanqua types esp. 'Yuletide', 'Appleblossom', 'Setsugekka'

Hellebore esp. orientalis types (wait until seeds start to form; dip ends in hot water for 30 sec)

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Corylopis pauciflora & spicata

Erica – not all are winter flowering, several have nice foliage color as well: Firefly, Winterflame

Daphne – odora in particular

Jasminum nudiflorum

Mahonia

Pieris

Don't deadhead your perennials:

Teasel

Siberian Iris heads

Phlomis

Grasses

Echinacea

A few last random multi-season interest flowering friends:

Spirea

Peony

Aster

Echinacea & Rudbeckia

Clematis armandii

Dahlia with dark foliage

Amsonia