



The color wheel can be used as a guide to the best color combinations.

Penn State extension agent suggests ways to make your landscape designs distinctive, attractive and formal.

■ "There's something about flowers that affects people and they make you, as a landscape manager, look good," says Judy Schwank of the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service in Leesport, Pa.

"But you've got to think about it a little bit," she adds. Before planning annual displays, you've got to educate yourself about color combinations and a few basics of design.

"Know a little bit about color, mass and texture," Schwank advises. "Think about unity, about pulling elements in the landscape together. At first, limit yourself to two or three varieties."

She says that color can be used in many ways, for instance:

- to create a vista,
- to create borders around areas,
- to highlight signage,
- to help brighten up a dark or shady area, or
- to give the landscape a "signature."

"You need a full color wheel to plan your color scheme," she says. You can find one in an encyclopedia, use the one here, or buy one at a graphic arts supply house. Then, you can combine colors in a number of different ways:

- 1) Single color
- 2) Primary color scheme (using red, yellow, blue)
- 3) Complementary colors (opposites on the color wheel)
- 4) Split complements (at thirds of the color wheel)
- 5) Adjacent colors (next to each other on the color wheel)

"Colors give you a psychological feeling," Schwank says. "Reds and yellows project a warm feeling; blues and pastels are cooler."

Other recommendations which she made at the Northeastern Pennsylvania Turfgrass Conference earlier this year:

- ☞ **Know** the height of the plant you're purchasing.
- ☞ **Use one** variety of plant, if you're mixing colors, so they're all the same height.
- ☞ **Don't** line them up like soldiers. Use alternate spacing so they look less formal.
- ☞ **Remember:** the larger the plant, the faster the color.
- ☞ **Plant closer** together than label recommendations, using 20 to 30 percent more plants.
- ☞ **Tall plants** should go in the back, low ones in the front.
- ☞ **Mix** texture and shapes, or forms.

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Violet ageratum and yellow marigolds go well together.





Zinnias lend a warm feeling to the landscape.

release fertilizer before planting and "hit them with quick-release during the season." During the growing season, you should also take off the dead flowers or you'll have botrytis problems on some plants.

She suggests this list of plants to try in your landscape: marigolds, melampodium (Gold Star Daisy), verbenas, gazania (daisy), petunias, gomphrena, dianthus, pansy, and vinca or periwinkle (but they will if planted early in cold, wet soils).

—Jerry Roche

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For instance, marigolds give a "coarse and massive feeling," cactus-type zinnias a "feathery" feeling.

Plan ahead, if possible, and make an arrangement to purchase plants with your greenhouse grower.

"You can make signs or designs out of flowers," she adds, "but be forewarned that they will be high maintenance."

Special designs—If you want to "paint" a special design, start by coloring

in squares on graph paper. This method can even work if you want to transpose a photo or complicated logo into flowers.

Before choosing which flowers you want to use, you should analyze your site. When planting, "organic matter helps," Schwank advises. And once the annuals have been planted, they will need some care. She suggests you apply slow-

Pastels have a calming effect on the surroundings.



COLOR HINTS:

The Penn State Cooperative Extension Service has some interesting ideas for combining colors in the landscape, as stated by Judy Schwank. But here are some alternative ideas from the Netherlands Flowerbulb Information Center:

- **Blues and yellows**—Combine shades of blue and yellow, selecting from pale yellow to deep gold and sky blue to turquoise. These pairings are best used when one color is selected as the principal shade and the other is used for accent.

- **Pastel passions**—Luscious pinks, corals, creams, lavenders and other pastel shades can capture the imagination. Set amid the lush greens of spring, these soft hues and shades please the eye and complement many interior decors. As homeowners sometimes like to create "extended living spaces," they like the idea of tying the landscape into their overall house decorating.

- **Red and yellow**—To many, especially men, no other color combination captures the joy of springtime so well as red and yellow. Not surprisingly, red and yellow reign as one of the favorite color combinations, not only in the U.S., but worldwide.

- **Shades of white**—White on white, white with off-white and ivory and white are all combinations that have a sophisticated appeal. This look is especially suited for smaller gardens or sections of large garden beds. They also make a fabulous border against a brick or stone wall. For an elegant look, group flowers by size, planting clusters of taller flowers among the shorter plants.

- **Orange and pinks**—Once a no-no, mixing these shades has become, for many, a passion. In the garden, apricot and coral flowers shine alongside "old-rose" shades of pink and mauve.

- **Orchids and yellows**—Taxi-yellow and sun-washed orchid is a color combo that signals the onset of warmer weather. On opposite sides of the color wheel, these two shades—in endless hues—jazz up any colorless corner.

- **Purples, blues and fiery reds**—Flowers offer a wealth of choices in these color families. To avoid a spotty look, use large patches of flowers in the blue and purple family to anchor the scheme, adding smaller areas of red for dynamic accent, or vice versa. A solid dash of white here and there lightens and heightens the impact.

For more information, contact the Netherlands Flowerbulb Information Center: 162 Montague St., Brooklyn Heights, NY 11201; (718) 596-5400.