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A garden full of surprises: Growing trends in 2003

by Nathalie Houde, Botanix

(NC)—If you're planning to re-do your garden this year, you may be interested to know that the trend in 2003 is color. There are all sorts of original ways to use color—in flowerbeds, hedges, shrubbery, ground covers... and even flowering trees.

The "stars" in your garden

Colors can produce all sorts of different effects. It all depends on how you use them. If you limit annuals and perennials to one or two favorite shades and harmonize these with the greens of your shrubs and ground cover plants, so that your garden plants highlight one another, you can create a truly dazzling effect. Warm colors (yellow, orange, red) produce a joyful effect. Their stimulating appearance makes them a good choice for use (among other places) near your entrance, for an effect that says, "Welcome!" Cool colors, on the other hand (blue, mauve, pink) are peaceful, reassuring, romantic and softly inviting. They fit perfectly into quiet corners, around the edges of pools and next to benches, where they deepen the overall effect.



Colors and seasons...living together in harmony

You can also try playing with colors to match the seasons. If lilacs have a big place in your garden, with their lavender and mauve spring blooms, choose rosebushes in summer with their rich blooms that draw on pink and red, and open the fall with yellows and oranges of grasses.

Plants with tricolor leaves...a garden kaleidoscope

The majority of plants have green leaves. A few species have yellowish or purple leaves. Others' leaves are variegated in two-color patterns. There's no doubt that the main trend in 2003 is to combine a great variety of shrubs, perennial plants and annuals with tricolor leaves into your garden plan.

The star among tricolor shrubs is the Hakuro Nishiki willow. A fast grower, its new, tender pink and cream shoots present an attractive contrast with the shrub's older green leaves and create a nice effect at the centre of a single-color arrangement tending toward lime green, a highly popular shade for the new season, as are fuchsia and lilac.

Among climbers, Ornamental Kiwi (Actinidia kolomikta) is a highly ornamental climbing plant. The tips of its green leaves are tinged with white or pink when the plant matures. The Star Showers Virginia creeper (Parthenocissus quinquefolia) is also an attention getter, with its spectacular white, pink and green mottled foliage that turns rose red in the fall.

Several perennials offer many surprising color arrangements as well as other surprises throughout the summer season. Examples are Bugleweed (Ajuga reptans), with leaves whose gray-green color disap-

pears almost completely under large spots of pink, purple and cream. Its spots are brighter in the spring and deeper in fall, and the Bugleweed produces handsome blue flowers in the spring. The "Amethystina" Tricyrtis (Tricyrtis form. "Amethystina") with its lilac-colored leaf ends, and the beige "El Desperado" Daylily (Hemerocallis) with its blood-red and ochre heart and the marked pink "Ruby Giant" Purple Echinacea (Echinacea purpurea). Botanix also has magnificent annuals with highly concentrated mauve and lilac colors. The "Zig Zag" Scaevola (Scaevola) with its white flowers zebra striped in lilac, the "Persian Shield" Strobilanthe (Strobilanthe) with variegated flowers in mauve, white and green, and the "Majesty Purple" Ornamental Millet (Millet), a veritable cloud of magnificent pink and white flowers, are just a few of examples of the new 2003 arrivals you'll find at Botanix.

Move your home décor outdoors

A garden is like another room of your house, a special space that puts you back in touch with all those small things that make life really worth living. Don't hesitate to use your ceramic flowerpots, outdoor utility tables and earthworks to recreate an outdoor corner of your house that you're especially fond of. And don't forget to install a lamp (standard or hanging) to provide lighting for those warm summer nights. Living in your garden is the ideal way to enjoy summer to the full.

When the sun doesn't shine, play with shade

Most summers have their cloudy periods, when there may be no direct sunlight. Or stretches of partly cloudy weather when your garden gets less than five hours of direct sunlight a day. Here's when shadow comes into play, with interaction of leaves, textures, surface contrasts and leaf sizes. Every garden has its characteristic shade patterns. You can also make attractive use of shrubs to create shapes and volumes that will move in the wind. This sort of movement can be quite sensual. If you want the full impact, work with Hostas, ferns and plants with various leaf textures and dimensions—plus stones and rough rocks, water, sculptures and garden plots.

Whether you own a home in town or a property with broad lawns all around, a condominium with a small terrace, or a third-floor apartment with just a balcony—wherever you live, there's always an ideal way to plan and plant your space...a way to make more of your great outdoors.

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