

Friday's Feature

By

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### **Plant winter annuals to add color to your landscape**

In Florida, we're lucky to have colorful flowers throughout the year. Now is the time to plant cool-season bedding plants for fall, winter and spring color.

When you replant your flower beds and containers, there are many wonderful cool-season bedding plants available. Excellent choices include pansy, viola, dianthus, sweet alyssum, calendula, snapdragon, petunia, sweet William, nicotiana, hollyhock, annual phlox, stock, statice, ornamental kale and cabbage, to name a few.

The colors available in these cool-season bedding plants are virtually unlimited. But that has its drawbacks, since the hard part is avoiding planting your garden with every color you can get your hands on. Using too many colors will lead to a chaotic look that is not as effective as a well-thought-out color scheme.

Here are some quick tips on color to get you started:

- Combine cool colors together, or warm colors together, for reliably harmonious results. Cool colors include burgundy, rose, pink, magenta, purple, violet, lavender, blue, navy and any variations of these colors. Warm colors include orange, gold, yellow, rust, peach and any variations of these colors. White combines equally well with either group, and true blue flowers also look good with just about any other color.
- Use color where you want to focus attention. The human eye is drawn instantly to color. Never use color to "beautify" an unattractive feature in your landscape such as a fire hydrant, storage shed or trash can area. You will simply make sure everyone notices it, and the color will not make it look any better.
- Use color where you can enjoy it. Many gardeners lavish their attention and garden budget on their front gardens and this is a wonderful gift they provide to their neighborhoods. But don't forget to include plantings of colorful cool-season bedding plants in beds, containers and hanging baskets around the patio and other outdoor living areas. Fragrant plants such as alyssum, stock and nicotiana are especially nice.
- It is also important to plant individual colors in masses or groups, especially if the bed will be viewed from a distance (as in a front bed being viewed from the street). If, for instance, you decide to use red, pink and white petunias, it is more effective to plant groups (three or more plants) of red, groups of

pink and groups of white in the bed. This allows each color to be noticed. A scattered planting of individual red, pink and white petunias would give the overall appearance of pink when viewed from a distance.

- Use pastel colors in areas that will be viewed primarily in the evening. Paler colors show up better in low light. Pastel colors also are important to consider when planting shady areas.
- Another benefit of pastel colors is that they make a space look larger and more open. If you have a courtyard that seems a little cramped, a pastel color scheme would be quite appropriate. And cool, pastel colors tend to create a serene, restful mood.

Creating an attractive, colorful look is easier than ever. But do a little thinking and planning before you go to the nursery. That way you generally will be more pleased with the results.

Above all, have fun. After all, if the color scheme isn't as great as you thought it would be, it's only there for a season. You can always try something different next time.

Theresa Friday is the Environmental Horticulture Extension Agent for Santa Rosa County. The use of trade names, if used in this article, is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product name(s) and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others.

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