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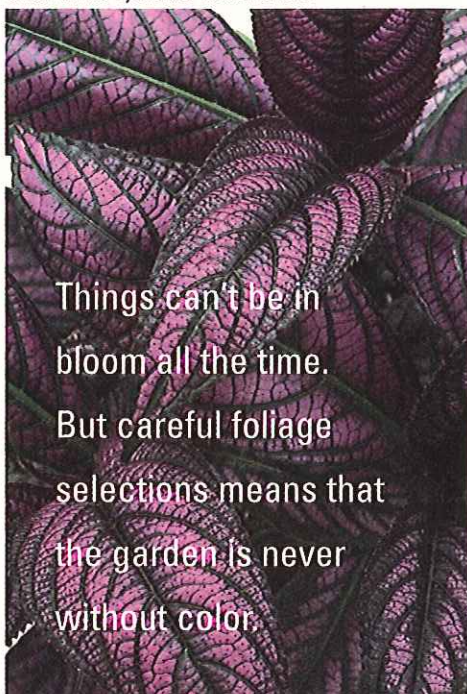


Color Your Garden with Fancy Foliage

Euphorbia 'Efanthia'



Strobilanthes dyerianus 'Persian Shield'



Things can't be in bloom all the time. But careful foliage selections means that the garden is never without color.

I've been fascinated with colorful foliage plants since I started to garden. The idea that a plant itself, not just the flowers, can be purple, pink or silver is still quite thrilling despite my years as a horticulturist and gardener. I love the beauty and charm of plants whose leaves rival flowers in their attraction. And their impact in the garden is not nearly as fleeting as are flowers.

I've amassed quite a collection of colored foliage plants that thrive in our area: golden hostas; purple coral bells and fountain grass; blue spruce and junipers and rue; and, of course, silver plants like lavender, artemesias, and Russian sage. I even have a black elderberry, *Sambucus* 'Black Beauty.'

Juxtaposition of colorful foliage plants adds drama to the landscape. I value the lovely

contrast of a purple barberry underplanted with golden *Lysimachia* 'Goldilocks' groundcover because it lasts all season. Silver-edged hosta planted in front of deep purple-leaved ninebark 'Diablo' will always look good—the summer flowers on the ninebark shrub are a bonus. *Euphorbia* 'Efanthia' is a perennial spurge with eye-catching red new growth that imitates flowers, only lasts longer.

Cream-colored and silver leaves not only blend well with practically everything else, but can be used to smooth transitions between colors that otherwise wouldn't work well together. My red-twig dogwood, *Cornus* 'Argentio-marginata,' separates a pink flowering clematis from a black-eyed Susan. The clematis and the black-eyed Susan might create a jarring note if they were directly adjacent, but adding the variegated silver and green dogwood foliage between them makes a pleasing display.

Golden-leaved plants look spectacular in afternoon shade, where they add light and brightness. Take, for example, the fabulous fountain-like new shrub, *Sambucus* 'Southerland

Lysimachia 'Goldilocks'



Plant photos courtesy of *Proven Winners*.

Gold.' This elderberry has beautiful, deeply cut, golden foliage. The spring growth is a beautiful copper-red and the plant has red summer berries, too. It's a must-see!

There are too many fantastic purple-leaved plants to mention. My favorites include *Weigela* 'Wine & Roses.' This four-foot shrub has season-long color with dark burgundy-purple foliage and intense rosy-pink flowers. It holds its purple color well in full sun, as does the ninebark selection *Physocarpus* 'Summer Wine.' This exciting new introduction has finely-cut deep crimson-red leaves on a compact five-foot plant. Very showy and extremely hardy, it should be available in garden centers next spring. My sneak-preview plant is thriving nicely! *Strobilanthes dyerianus* 'Persian Shield' is a tender perennial with luminous leaves of purple with silvery pink centers. It is amazing.

This is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to plants with fabulous foliage. Take advantage of the great fall planting weather to add some lasting color to your garden using prettily leaved plants like those I've described. Design