

Planting by colour

Contemporary gardeners are showcasing their adventurous side, moving away from traditional planting schemes and towards more dynamic designs centred on complementary colour palettes.

Over a quarter of gardeners follow a colour scheme, with many seeing colour as one of the most important qualities when buying a plant.

A dominant colour is often accented with plant pairings that look good together for form or colour all year round, moving harmoniously with the seasons. Early summer welcomes pastel hues before the hot reds, oranges, pinks and yellows dominate later in the season. Brits' ongoing quest to turn their outdoor space into an oasis of calm, especially amongst urban gardeners, is driving sales of green and white flowered plants; while shrubs that offer multi-season interest are also increasingly popular.

Colour is not only a focal point for flowers, but also an appealing factor when it comes to stems and leaves – and the aptly-named Hydrangea 'Magical' ticks both boxes. The plant series, which provides long-season interest, has become the top-selling summer flowering shrub, up 15% YOY with particular growth in the muted pastel shades.



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“We know that customers turn to bright colours and cheery plant pots as a pick-me-up for their gardens, and with the looming uncertainty of Brexit in 2019, we expect sales of brightly coloured plants to soar.”

Patrick Wall,
Plant Buyer, Wyevale Garden Centres

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Favouring fragrance & texture

Scent plays an increasingly important role in gardeners' planting schemes. Many plants such as herbs and geraniums not only offer fragrance through their flowers but also their leaves, bringing a beautiful aroma to the garden which can later be enjoyed in vases or potpourri. The trend for small-space gardening has turned attentions toward scented plants that make much more of an impact in enclosed spaces, where their fragrance is contained. Traditional favourites such as lavender and rosemary are trending for this reason, joined by more unusual shrubs such as *daphne* and *sarcococca*.

Dual-purpose plants that are both fragrant and offer a unique, architectural look and feel are also gaining ground. Just as florists are using unexpected, seasonal elements to reinvent traditional arrangements, this approach is being reflected in the garden. Textural plants such as ferns, grasses and trailing varieties are surging in sales. Ornamental vegetables including artichoke and kale are being introduced to flower beds to add structure, texture and colour as well as space-saving solutions for gardeners with no room for a vegetable patch.

Shady dealings

Just as fragrance and colour have the ability to transport us, light also plays an essential role in the garden and is one of the most crucial factors for garden design. This not only relates to creating ambience with solar lighting, or ensuring visitors are entertained in the sunniest spots of the garden, but also getting the most from our plants using natural light and shady spots.

Shade is a major concern, with nearly a fifth of gardeners listing it as their most common gardening headache.

Weather aside, shade in the garden is a rising concern for Brits, particularly those in urban areas where gardens are surrounded by fences, tall buildings or sheltered by surrounding balconies. Whether dealing with part-shade or complete shade throughout the day, gardeners often worry that their plants won't respond well to a dark environment.

Google searches for 'shade tolerant shrubs' were up 110% in 2018.

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“Planting for a shady garden is one of the most queried topics from customers in centres and online. Many people don't know that there are different types of shade, such as dry and damp shade, and that certain plants have the ability to flourish in these conditions. The introduction of our 'Garden Solutions' area for 2019 will help customers deal with the everyday problem of shade, as well as soil conditions, lack of time and the use of colour and fragrance.”

Mark Sage,
Head of Horticulture, Wyevale Garden Centres

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Shade-loving plants include:



The 2019 Pantone Colour of the Year, 'Living Coral', has already filtered through to social media feeds and homeware design for spring/summer and is set to gain ground in the garden. Representing the fusion of modern life with nature, 'Living Coral' is a must-have for contemporary gardeners, with Wyevale Garden Centres predicting increased sales across coral ranges of:

