

LUCY HARDIMAN
PERENNIAL PARTNERS
1234 SE 18TH AVE
PORTLAND, OR 97214
503-231-0025
LUCYFLORA@COMCAST.NET

**ALL AROUND THE COLOR WHEEL:
A RAINBOW IN THE GARDEN**

COLOR

Color is a subjective topic. Each of us perceives, uses, and responds to color differently. Keep that in mind as we explore the role of color in the garden. Color creates moods. Color is altered by the quality of light from morning to night and day to day throughout the seasonal continuum. In shade, pastel and paler colors appear luminous; in full sun situations, colors fade and bleach out.

Colors have an affect on each other

If viewed separately from others, they retain their identity

Several colors juxtaposed next to each other produce new images. This is known as simultaneous contrast.

Red

Hot color

Provocative

Adds drama and excitement

Foreshortens the distance so it advances perspective

Exclamation point (coupe do rouge of painters)

Demands attention

Looks best with mid-range greens

Cooled and soothed by blue

Made more exciting with yellow

Along with oranges and magenta, works well in high summer light

Attracts pollinators and hummingbirds

Pink and Mauve

Large range of colors from pale blush through magenta

Tinted and grayed version of stronger hues, i.e. red, purple and magenta

Bleached by strong light

Subtle or insipid

Safe or neutral

Illuminates areas after dark

Darker with white or silver
Brighter with gray
Redder with green
Provides peaceful and hazy background

Violet/Purple

Cool color
Somber/serious
Background for more exuberant colors
Violet is found at the edge of the rainbow where it merges with ultra-violet rays that
we cannot see
Bees and other insects are attracted to violet
Mix red and violet to get purple
Closest to black

Blue

Cool color
Calms and soothes surrounding colors – even orange
Is the color of distance and space
Lengthens the view causing distance to recede
Is both stimulating and restful – sky
Is melancholy, dull and muted – water
Consorts well with other colors
Appears bluer in the shade
Glow at twilight and remains visible longer than any color other than white
Use in the spring when light is clean and clear and the foliage has yellow tints

Green

Green is a color too – forms the backdrop of the garden
Huge range of shades – green has much to offer the gardener as foreground color
Used with built structures, it softens the linear and links the man-made with the
natural world
Green-on-green compositions rely on texture, color and form
Freshens the garden
Denotes peacefulness
Green foliage tends to enhance red tints in neighboring flowers or leaves

Yellow

Hot color
Evokes spring and fall
Dual nature – happy and sad
Affected by quality of light more than other colors
Spring – light and fresh
Summer – brassy and bold
Autumn – mellow
Most luminous of all colors
Is perceived by the eye before all other colors

Neutralized depth and prevents perspective
Clearest next to white
In sun, green leaves are more yellow than blue

Orange

Hot color – lies between red and yellow on the color wheel
Demanding and strident
Harmonizes with orange-red and yellow or less saturated versions of itself, like russet or copper
Difficult to place
Partner with bronze, dusky purple and chartreuse foliage
Effective paired with green
Salmon and apricot unsaturated version of parent, easier to use

Gray

Never clashes with other colors
Makes surrounding foliage and flowers appear more intense
Many gray or silver foliage plants are drought tolerant

White

Color of maximum lightness
Appearance depends on texture
Few flowers are truly white – most have touches of other colors
Glow at twilight and in the dark
Soft and mellow
Provides emphasis or contrast
White and cream variegated leaves provide luminosity, especially in the shade
Many whites appear muddy
The exclamation points of the garden
They stop the eye
They lift the eye skyward
Provides drama, are exciting and provocative
They break the rounded masses and punctuate the profile

COLOR SCHEMES

Cool colors

Soothe the eye and the soul
Calm and serene
Can be boring

Warm colors

Visually exciting
Demand attention
Ignite the garden

Analogous (Harmonious) Color Scheme

Colors adjacent on the color wheel
Safe combinations that always look good
Share one or more hues

Contrasting (Complementary) Color Scheme

Colors opposite on the color wheel
Daring and bodacious
Share no hues in common

Monochromatic

Shades, tints, and tones of a single hue
Popularized by Vita Sackville West at Sissinghurst Castle, Kent, UK
Difficult to do well
Trendy, can be boring

Color Echo (Color Run)

Elements of monochromatic
Great way to control color schemes
Color of one element repeats in another