

Star-Telegram

Plan and plant now for year-round color

Posted Friday, Apr. 09, 2010

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In spring, a gardener's mind turns, of course, to dirt, glorious dirt. Spring, like fall, is planting time, a season to put into colorful ideas that have been percolating throughout the long, dull winter in the gardener's brain.

For many of us, year-round color is a goal. Here will be a mass of gold lantana in July. There will be a pop of pink autumn. What? You haven't spent the off-season planning the January-to-December color additions to your beds?

No worries. We haven't either. But we do know the local experts to call for advice before our spring plant-shopping excursion.

We asked them: What are your favorite plant, shrub and tree choices for year-round color? Here we share their finds. Check the light requirements for each plant you buy, and place it in your garden accordingly. Also, some of these are available only in-season. If you need advice, ask your garden-store expert. (Plants marked with an asterisk will be at the Worth Botanic Garden's spring plant sale.)

January

Herb: Hardy Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Arp' (herb with tiny blue flowers on deep green foliage)*

Trees: Coral-bark maple (reddish maroon bark)

Shrub: Winter honeysuckle, *Lonicera fragrantissima* (cream-colored flowers with a wonderful fragrance)

Flowering plants: Dianthus*, cyclamen, Matrix pansy

Bulbs: Paperwhites (bright white flowers that are fragrant and great for cutting and bringing inside in a dreary month)

February

Shrub: Leatherleaf mahonia, *Mahonia bealei* (terminal spikes of bright yellow and fragrant flowers that attract bees or

Flowering plants: Lenten rose (hellebore), primrose

Bulbs: Daffodil/narcissus (the smaller the flower, the better they return next year; so easy, need no care)

March

Trees: Mexican plum, *Prunus mexicana* (white, honey-scented blossoms against dark bark); redbud

Vine: "Tangerine Beauty" crossvine, *Bignonia capreolata* (orange, trumpet-shaped flowers with yellow center)*

Bulbs: "Ice Follies" daffodils, grape hyacinth (small clusters of purple flowers; great for lawns, just mow it when it's done)

Shrub: Japanese rose, *Kerria* (bright yellow flowers on a fountain-shaped bush)

Flowering plant: 'Texas Gold' columbine*

April