

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)

[Nancy's Garden Blog](#)

Just another WordPress.com weblog

Feeds:

[Posts](#)

[Comments](#)

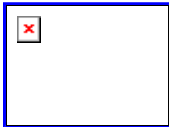
I'm Already Planning Next Year's Garden; Can't Wait

December 7, 2009 by [Nancy's Garden](#)

Timely Tip:

If the leaves of your indoor plants are turning brown at the tips, they are probably suffering from a lack of humidity. Placing the pots on a pebble tray filled with water or running a small room humidifier will add moisture to the air and help remedy the situation.

Okay, About Next Year



Now that winter has clearly moved in, for me it's time to begin planning next year's garden. One of the secrets to success is looking back at the previous growing season to see what worked and what bombed.

Like a lot of gardeners, the summer of 2009 was a real toughie for me. The cold wet spring followed by a cold wet summer took its toll on my pretties.

But all was not lost, there were some real stars in my garden last summer. Plants that endured in spite of the weather. Plants that flowered non-stop from the day I planted them right through to the killing frost. Plants that provided entire season of drop-dead color.

It may surprise you that many of the stellar performers in my garden were annuals, plants too often shunned by perennial lovers. Gardeners who consider annuals to be passé are missing out big time.

Using annuals in a perennial border to keep season long color is not a new idea, it's a technique used by many of the masters. World-renowned plantsman Christopher Lloyd relies on annual plants to infuse color into his famous and fabulous mixed border at Great Dixter in England and keep it colored up for the entire season. Lloyd readily admits that relying on perennials alone to provide 3-seasons of color is wishful thinking.

Dan Hinkley, famed plantsman formally of Heronswood Nursery in Seattle and his partner also used flowering annuals to give their world-class plant displays real punch.

Annuals have always been a staple in container gardening, but the hot trend – if it grows it goes, allows gardeners to place fabulous accents, bursting with color, in the hardscape as well as the landscape. A decade ago a pot of petunias or geraniums and a spike might suffice but today trendy gardeners are pushing the envelope when it comes to plant combinations.

To feed the frenzy, incredible numbers of new varieties of easy-care annuals are now introduced to the green market place annually.

Several years ago trend setting designers began using tropicals, tender plants that were once relegated to the indoor garden, in their containers and garden. Suddenly leaf size and texture as well as color became important elements in the designs.

Creative gardeners who choose to break out of the box often include edible greens such as lettuces, chards and decorative

cabbages.

Today garden centers on the cutting edge, those who want to successfully compete with the big box and super stores, are offering their customers a selection of annual plants many gardeners may not be familiar with.

However, unlike clothing, one cannot simply choose plants according to size, color, pattern and texture. To create a winning combination that will not just look good but thrive in the garden, a gardener must make sure his or her choices are the right plants for the right places and that partners are compatible.

Sun lovers must be paired with other sun lovers and planted in a sunny spot. Plants that need moist growing conditions make bad bedmates with xeric plants.

Unfortunately some of the new introductions fail to live up to their hype, so wise gardeners test first and corner the market when they find a sure thing.



Zinnia_Zahara_Starlight_Rose

Choosing annuals that have been singled out by the All American Selections organization is a good bet (the 2010 winners are announced at <http://www.all-americaelections.org>). These plants have been trialed in gardens all over the country and not only thrived, but also displayed a significant improvement over older varieties. The zinnia on the right is one of the 2010 AAS winners.

Doing your homework now and beginning the planning of next summer's garden will help you not only garden smarter, but create that dream garden you always wished for.

Possibly related posts: (automatically generated)

- [Gardening books help out green thumbs](#)
- [Starting A Plant Collection In Your Garden](#)
- [Good Books Make Good Xmas Gifts](#)
- [Humanity's Pursuit of Purpose \(2\)](#)

Posted in [Flowers](#), [Garden Design](#) | Tagged [Annual flowers](#) | No Comments Yet

[Comments RSS](#)

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

E-mail (will not be published) (required)