

The wealth of colors available makes choosing a shrub similar to selecting a piece of furniture or clothing. A well-planned landscape design is completed slowly--a few items each season. Harmony and balance are maintained if you're sure flowering shrubs that bloom at the same time complement each other. Bright oranges and magentas don't and actually seem to vibrate when next to each other.

Hot reds and scarlets mix well with the gentler, more quiet pastel pinks. Strong yellows and pinks are a jarring combination. But different shades of yellow and yellow orange are lovely with the yellow green of opening leaves. Red looks best with white and dark green as background colors. Rose pink and yellow pink look best when set off with some white.

Select colors with the background in mind, too. Rosy purples or bluish pinks can look unpleasant in front of a red brick house or a wall with orange or yellow tones. Instead, sparkle the border with white flowers, creamy tones, and pale pastels.

Remember, deep or dark colors recede into the background of dark foliage but stand out with lighter yellow greens. For shady areas or with evergreens as a background, flowers with lighter tones are more effective. Against white or pale-colored walls, and in full sunshine, brilliant and dark flowers are striking. Careful planning of colors can make your landscape a refreshing picture.