

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS IN CHOOSING PLANT COMPOSITION FOR LANDSCAPING

SOLUȚII PRACTICE ÎN REALIZAREA UNOR COMPOZIȚII VEGETALE PENTRU AMENAJĂRILE PEISAGISTICE

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Abstract. *In the landscaping can be used several types of plants designed to give the space a dynamism in shape and colour, a pleasant ambience, ensuring unity of the whole overall. One way to influence the image of a planted area is by creating a game between colour and texture, shadow and light. Thus, the methods used in determining the plant composition for landscaping may be used seasonal planting schemes or planting schemes using dominant colours. The effect is that we get a focal point but other colours than the dominant one can be placed in smaller, contrasting groups using species with decorative foliage or fruits. When used in this way, the colours used quantitatively less do not compete but increase the decorative effect. For each planning the approach is different because the environment is unique, so the solution will be unique. The present paper wants to offer concrete solutions to create harmonious plant compositions more easily addressed by practitioners.*

Key words: landscaping, plant compositions, colouristic effects

Rezumat. *În cadrul amenajărilor peisagere se pot folosi o serie de tipuri de plante menite să confere spațiului jocuri de formă și culoare, ambianță plăcută și unitatea întregului ansamblu. Un mod de a influența imaginea unui spațiu plantat este prin realizarea unui joc între culoare și textură, umbră și lumină. Astfel, ca metode folosite în determinarea compozițiilor vegetale pentru amenajările peisagere se pot utiliza scheme de plantare sezoniere sau scheme de plantare utilizând culori dominante. Efectul este că se obține un punct de interes în care alte culori decât cea dominantă pot fi introduse în grupuri mai mici, contrastante cu specii decorative prin frunze sau fructe. Atunci când sunt utilizate în acest mod, culorile cantitativ mai puține nu concurează, ci accentuează. Pentru fiecare amenajare abordarea este diferită pentru că mediul înconjurător este unic, deci și soluția va fi unică. Lucrarea de față dorește să ofere soluții concrete de realizare a unor compoziții vegetale armonioase mai ușor de abordat de către practicieni.*

Cuvinte cheie: amenajare peisagistică, compoziții vegetale, efecte coloristice

INTRODUCTION

Plant colour in garden design is immensely important and can be utilized to create focal points in the landscape. Dark-coloured plants contrasted with light-coloured plants draw one's attention in a planting composition. For instance,

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unique, colourful foliage, like the reddish bronze of the smoke bush, stands out among the various greens of garden

Garden designs which rely on few elements in terms of plant species, form, colour and texture often produce the most successful compositions. One basic design principle is to group plants into massings that contain three, five, or seven shrubs rather than placing individual plants here and there. As individual plants grow together they become visually read as clusters of colour or textures and not single specimens (Hubhouse Penelope, 1997, Hackett B., 1979).

One way to influence the image of a planted area is by creating a play between colour and texture, shadow and light. Thus, in terms of compositional contrast or harmony, colour or volumetric configuration, we can get interesting and spectacular effects. We can create a composition whose background is made from a tree with light green leaves. These trees are well located, in rhythmic repetition, and in front of them, in the near foreground can be added decorative trees with yellow to red-brick foliage, placed in different size groups. In the front may be planted flower species and ornamental shrubs. All this will be true colour spots on a fresh green lawn. Imagination is the key to a successful solution, and the possibilities are endless (Iliescu Ana Felicia, 2006).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

If we rely on nature's seasonal colours, yellow and white for spring, pink for early summer, blue and gold for mid-summer, dark-pink for late summer and blue, purple and gold for the fall, will not be too difficult to have a abundant colour throughout the year. Although nature has not subtle harmonies, still has a generous offer.

In the present paper we have tried several variations of plant composition using **plantation schemes using dominant colours**. Thus, large groups of flowers are spread over each flowering season. The effect is that you get a single color, but other colors can be placed in smaller groups with contrasting decorative foliage and species as the dominant element. When used in this way, the colors less quantity do not compete but increase the decorative effect.

Planning should start from an analysis of existing situation and starting with having a vision of the final product. There can be set a main concept of the garden, such an approach to romantic or informal compositions. Than the planting has to be made according to the needs of each plant individually. The combinations are virtually infinite and unique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first step in planning a garden is to determine whether or not we need a fence. Garden can be surrounded by an artificial or natural fence or just can be an open garden. An interesting solution and very easy to be put into practice could be a wooden fence in combination with shrubs and flowers in bright colours that would blur the fence stiffness (fig. 1). To this end we may use the following species: *Forsythia*, *Aster*, *Hibiscus*, *Astilbe*, *Gazania*, *Tagetes*, *Lavandula*. If already exists a built fence, we can mitigate its austerity using with climbing plants: *Ipomoea*, *Clematis*, *Wisteria*, *Parthenocissus*, *Lonicera*, *Bignonia*, *Tecoma* etc. (Bernardis R., 2010; Draghia Lucia, 2004; Şelaru Elena, 2007)

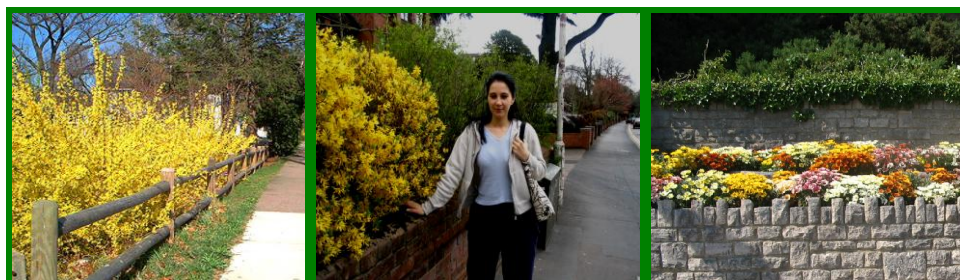


Fig. 1 - Using shrubs and flowers in the construction of a fence to mitigate its sobriety (original)

The next step is choosing the wood species and must not forget that by planting trees, they will stay put for a long time. No garden can be so small that it does not fit at least one tree in it. In the absence of sufficient space can opt for medium-sized species.

Juxtaposition creates visual interest in the garden and is most often achieved with plant form, texture or colour. For example, a tall, upright shrub planted within a shrub border of spreading and round shrubs will stand out. Columnar and pyramidal-shaped plants, such as *Taxus baccata* or *Thuja*, have visual characteristics that suggest vertical edges in an outdoor space. They create a major contrast with the more common rounded or spreading plants.



Fig. 2 - Medium size vegetation used in small gardens as dominant elements (original)

Emphasising one element in the composition can create a focal point in the garden. Size, such as a large shade tree, can achieve this. Contrast and the juxtaposition of colours, forms or textures can also draw attention to a feature in the landscape. For example, *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta', with its tortuous branches becomes a focal point if it is planted among shrubs with straight branches and fine foliage such as *Ligustrum* or *Hibiscus*.

Another decorative specie is Japanese cherry tree, which gives a real show in the flowering period. White-pink petals falling as a rain and pleasant scent will assail your senses and human emotions.

Medium size vegetation may be composed of decorative small trees and shrubs as: *Malus pumila*, *Magnolia* sp., *Cercis siliquastrum*, *Sorbus aucuparia* (fig. 2.), *Syringa vulgaris*, *Forsythia x intermedia*, *Buxus sempervirens* etc. Depending on the personality of each garden owner we will choose different species. Customization is an important factor in this field, as in architecture and urbanism.

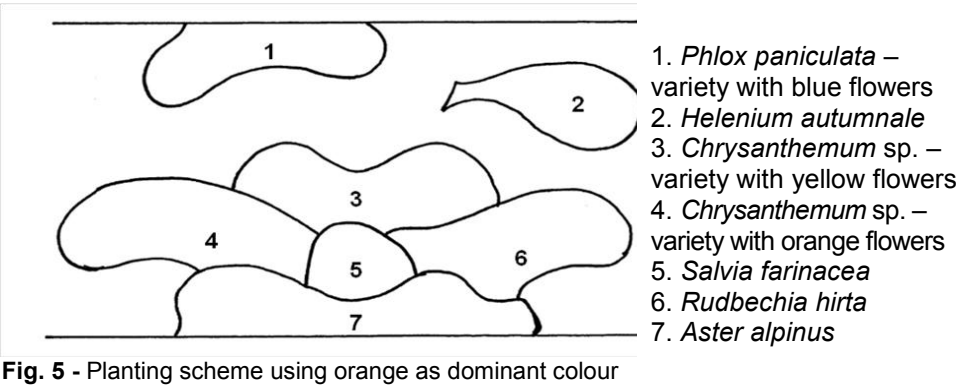
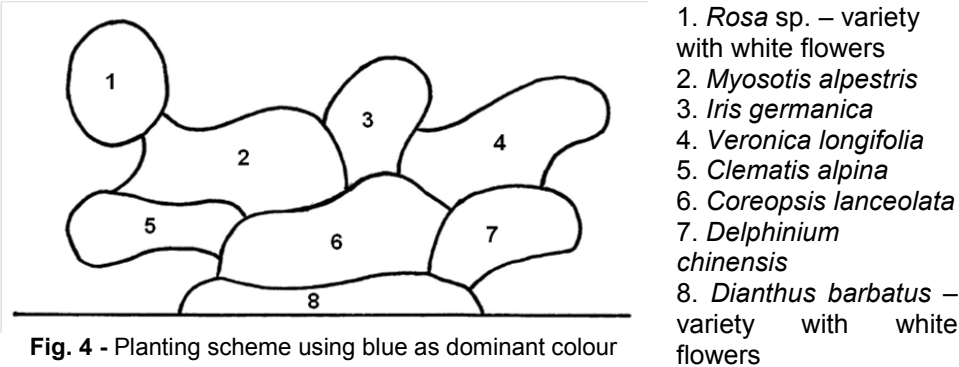


Fig. 3 - Climbing plants used to cover pergolas – *Wisteria* sp. (original)

Colouristic schemes. Colour scheme will help create an overall feeling in the garden, green is a constant in the landscape and will dominate the garden, especially through spring and summer. A variety of greens has more visual appeal than a uniform shade of green. A common mistake gardeners make is to use too many different colours. Try to choose few colours and one as an overall theme. This will help to tie all the elements of you garden together, creating unity (Dumitraş Adelina et al, 2008).

Single colour themes could also give a wonderful effect, and it is interesting that different colour themes may be suited to different locations and conditions: yellow tones bring vitality in the shade of buildings and many yellow flower and foliage plants prefer the low light of such locations. Most blue flowered and silver or grey foliated plants, on the other hand, need full sun and warm conditions to grow well and develop their most effective foliage colours. This is because the grey or silver leaf colour that arises from a woolly or 'tomentose' leaf surface is usually an adaptation to moisture stress or intense sunlight in the plant's natural habitat.

In the following figures (fig. 4 and 5) are presented some planting schemes using dominant colours. The effect of one colour scheme will be even stronger when, by juxtaposition of rightly placed complementary colours are added.



A richly coloured scheme would create character of summer intensity and would work well in the clear bright light. *Hibiscus*, *Bougainvillea* and *Cannas* all look their best and belong together in the brilliant light and strong shadows of summer days.

Repetition is a planting design principle which can create a feeling of rhythm when moving the landscape (Muja S., 1994). This can be achieved by planting the same or similar plants in different parts of the garden. Repeating patterns in the design can also help create unity in the composition.

In the garden, composition includes planning for season changes in the landscape. That’s why we have to try to incorporate, in our design, plants which have year-round decorative aspect. A good example is planting several small trees and shrubs that will flower in the spring, offer lush foliage through the summer, provide colour in the fall with its foliage and form fruits which can last through the winter.

The success of the restricted colour themes like white gardens is partly thanks to the variety and emphasis the foliage add to the scheme. This is strongest for a red colour theme in which the red flower hues are complemented by the

foliage greens, but in other colour themes as well there will still be enough variety in the foliage to liven up the composition and have unity.

Well balanced, dual colour themes can also unify a planting scheme. The contrast and enhancement of complementary colours is most powerful when each hue is restricted to a narrow range. Colour composition can be based on value (darkness or lightness) and intensity (richness of colour) rather than just on hue – light colour flower and grey foliage are given unity by the grey or white that is found in all the pastel hues.

CONCLUSIONS

Successful gardening design requires learning certain skills and following some simple principles, but the final result can be perceived differently, after all, a garden's beauty is in the eye of the beholder. There are no fixed rules to garden design. But there are a few elements of composition that will serve the garden designer well, when combining plants. And the only way to get good at garden design is to do it.

In order to have a pleasant decorative effect in planting colour schemes we have to keep in mind some aspects:

- for monochromatic combinations choose one hue and using it in its various shades, tints and tones;
- for contrasting combinations favour one colour and use the other as an accent or focal point;
- use texture and form for variety, rather than too much colour.

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