

Colorful Garden Retreat



Colorful border around a water feature and seating areas.

Beautiful retreats feature cozy and quiet seating areas, fragrant and soothing colors, or exciting colorful plantings, and sometimes a small water feature. Colorful plantings attract birds, bees, hummingbirds and butterflies.

Make the garden any size you want and plant however many of each plant that will fit into that space at the mature size. This particular garden retreat is about 50 ft. by 20 ft.

First thought should be your seating areas and how to arrange them. I would add a small table between the two chairs.

Substitute another bench for the two chairs, or set up an intimate little bistro set in that space.

Teeny, warm white solar fairy lights (non-blinking) scattered among the plantings and a few solar landscape lights, will add romance and some evening safety for walking, and floating lights will add some sparkle and magic to the little pond.

Add birdbaths and a feeder to welcome wildlife into your peaceful retreat.

Many pollinators use birdbaths to drink from. Welcoming the birds will eliminate the need for insect repellent in the evenings. Birds are voracious insect-eating machines.

The little pond is your focal point. A floating solar lily pad fountain can be placed inside the water feature, and inside bird baths. And your water feature can be cute and small.

Easy to take care of if you just float real or artificial water lilies.

I use several round enamelware basins and other items in my gardens to add water features.

The small centerpiece pond pictured in the design can be a very large basin or galvanized tub in any shape, and it can be buried partially or fully in the ground with rocks around the edge. It can be sunken, level with the ground, or elevated. You can also find small pre-formed hard plastic pond liners that you can bury and decorate with stacked stones around it. The smaller it is, the less care you have to give it.



I have several of these solar floating lily pad fountains inside the bowls of my bird baths.

The birds love it, and the sound of water is appealing to humans, too.

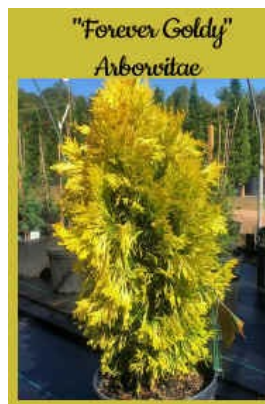
Following is my recommended planting key, designated by the letters A-G, as shown in the garden design above. Choose varieties that appropriate in your region's hardiness zone.

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A. "Forever Goldy" Arborvitae is a golden evergreen perfect for creating a focal point, screen or natural barrier.

"Forever Goldy" grows pyramidally, and reaches a height of 10 feet and a width of between 3 and 4 feet.

The glowing, ruffled foliage stays beautiful all year, and adds winter interest and a habitat for birds.. Zones 5-8.



B. Bee Balm (Monarda) - "Cherry Pop" or "Fireball"

A magnet for all pollinators. 15-24" tall x 18-24" wide. Also comes in pinks and purples. Leaves have an earthy, minty fragrance. Easy to grow and propagate in other parts of your garden and landscape.



C. Hardy Hibiscus - Zones 4-9.

This tall, stunning giant-flowered cousin of Rose of Sharon blooms constantly from mid-July almost until Halloween. Varieties reach 3-6 ft. tall. Huge 10-12" diameter blooms clustered all along the stem. These come in all shades of pink, a burgundy, violets and white.

I use them along a fence and they're no care at all except for staking once they mature and rise to 6 ft. These are winter hardy and die to the ground in fall, coming back in late spring and early summer.

I recommend the white, hot pink and deep burgundy red varieties for the boldest color impact. Do not confuse Hardy Hibiscus with "Tropical Hibiscus", which are not winter hardy at all.

Read about Giant Hibiscus and how to grow them [on this page](#).



D. Panicle Hydrangea - "Wim's Red" - Zones 4-8

When blooms begin in the early spring, they appear as a creamy white color, turning into pink toward mid summer, until the entire plant looks like cotton candy.

From late summer into the fall, it shows off blooms in magenta and burgundy. The plant will grow to 3 to 5 feet in height, and a width of 3 to 4 feet when fully matured.

Hydrangeas make beautiful cut flowers, and are easy to dry for winter floral arrangements. They will practically dry themselves on their stems in fall, or they will dry standing in a vase if you let the water evaporate. Pick the color blooms you like, Pull off almost all leaves but a few top ones, and dry those flowers before the color changes again.

E. and F - Garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*)
- zones 4 to 8

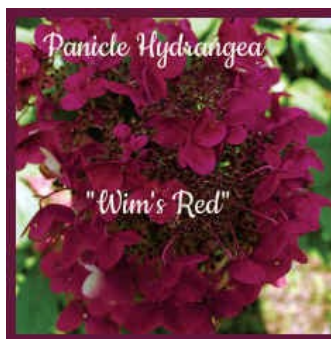
Perennial. Blue-violet, white, pink or pink-violet blooms in summer, 24-36 in. tall and 18 to 24 in. wide.

G. Astilbe - various colors.
Zones 3-8.

Choose bright and bold colors. Does best in part or full shade, and does well in morning sun.

Summer blooms are colorful, feathery plumes over foliage that resembles ferns.

24-28 inches high, 15-24 inches wide.



Choose your favorite bright colors.



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