



SILVER: A JEWEL IN THE GARDEN

While many people spend time planning flower color in the garden, fewer think about leaf color. Most perennials bloom for only several weeks out of the season, making foliage a critical factor in the overall effect of the garden. Silver leaves add interest and contrast throughout the growing season. They also provide a buffer between clashing colors, cool down hot color combinations and brighten up shady areas. Try adding some silver-leafed plants to make the garden sparkle—whether it is in or out of flower.

Silver-leafed plants come in a wide array of forms, ranging from diminutive with fine-textured foliage to giant with large, bold leaves. Many of these plants are tough and drought resistant, thriving even in lean soil and the hot summer sun. Others prefer shade and mix well into the woodland garden.

To add fine leaf texture to the sunny garden, plant some silver-leafed yarrow. 'Anthea' or 'Moonshine' are good choices. Both produce lemon-yellow flowers throughout the summer if kept deadheaded. If an airy look is desired, add some

Russian sage. Its upright, silvery stems and lavender-blue flower spikes combine well with black-eyed Susans or coneflowers. Add a tall ornamental grass as a backdrop for additional interest.



Achillea 'Moonshine'

Add cool elegance to the front of the sunny border or to rock gardens with silver-leafed plants. Rock cress is a lovely little perennial that grows only about 6" tall, forms a loose mat of silvery-green foliage and produces white or rose-colored flowers in late April into May. Continue the color on into summer with cheddar pinks (*Dianthus gratianopolitanus*). These low-growing plants produce fragrant flowers in shades of pink and red in May and June and sporadically throughout the summer. Add a grouping of silver-leafed sedum for a contrast in texture and continuing color. October stonecrop (*Sedum sieboldii*) grows about 6-8" tall and pro-

duces dusty pink flowers in September and October.

Artemisias work wonderfully to buffer clashing colors or cool down vivid combinations in the hot sunny border. Try 'Silver Mound' or 'Silver Brocade' to lend a fine texture near the front of the border, or 'Lambrook Silver' if a taller plant is needed. If coarse, woolly leaves are in order, try planting Lamb's Ear. 'Silver Carpet' stays very short. Use 'Helen Von Stein' if more height is desired. Try using a silvery groundcover to border a bright flowerbed. Snow-in-summer grows only 8-12" tall, has woolly silver foliage and is covered in white daisy flowers from May into June.

Don't overlook annuals when searching for silver. Many blend beautifully into the sunny border. For a bold look, try *Plectranthus*—its soft silver leaves and great stature make it stand out in the garden. *Datura* also makes a strong statement, with large silvery leaves topped by huge, white trumpet-shaped flowers. Add some Lotus (Parrots's Beak) to containers and flower boxes and let its soft feathery foliage trail gracefully over the side. Licorice plant

(*Helichrysum petiolaris*) also look, add some Lavender. plants with glossy foliage. Use works well for this purpose. This Lavender is also valued for its Lamium to set off the lovely, dark is available in both a large-leafed attractive purple/lavender flowers green leaves of Heartleaf and a small-leafed variety, and and its delicious scent. For *Bergenia*. both types make an attractive height and an unusual texture, combination intermingled with also grow some silver dollar geraniums or with brightly Eucalyptus, and harvest some colored petunias. *Gazania* for use in dried bouquets. 'Talent Mix' combines silver foliage with brightly colored Some silver-leafed plants do well flowers and is cheerful mixed in the shady garden. Shade-loving plants with silvery tones are very effective at lighting up a the border. are very effective at lighting up a shady border. Try mixing

Many herbs have a silvery cast Japanese painted ferns with purple-leafed coral bells for a beautifully with annuals and lovely contrast in both color and perennials in the border or in texture. containers. Of course, they also For an excellent groundcover, have the added benefit of even in dry shade, plant some fragrance, and are often edible as well. Try a silver sage or low-growing *Lamium*. Try woolly thyme for a low-growing 'Beacon Silver' (white-flowers) or border or in a container, or mix 'Pink Pewter' (pink flowers) in a some creeping rosemary or dark corner or under shade *Dittany of Crete* into a hanging trees. *Lamium* works especially basket. For a soft, more upright well when planted near other

plants with glossy foliage. Use Lamium to set off the lovely, dark green leaves of Heartleaf *Bergenia*.

Pulmonaria (Lungwort) is another worthwhile plant to try. It boasts unusual mottled leaves, and spring flowers of pink, blue, or a combination of the two. It enjoys similar conditions to ferns and combines well with them.



Silver foliated plants look beautiful next to neighbors with blue flowers.