



Silver Plants

Whether you're looking to add contrast in texture or in color, interest without flowers, or an understated touch of elegance, silver-foliaged plants will fit the bill. As an added bonus, most of these pretty plants are much tougher than they look, drought tolerant troopers that ask only for good drainage, an occasional haircut and a place in the sun.

Perennials

Achillea (Yarrow)

Moonshine is one of the best yarrows and one of the finest perennials for silver foliage. Growing about two feet tall, it bears cheery, lemon yellow flowers over its stunning, fern-like foliage. Flowering continues from June until fall if plants are kept deadheaded. Both flowers and foliage dry well and are lovely in arrangements. Easy-care, this plant likes full sun and well-drained soil of low fertility.

Artemisia (Wormwood)

Silver Mound is the classic silvery Artemisia. Growing to about a foot high, its soft, silky, mounding foliage begs to be touched. It is effective when massed, and is a

particularly good choice for rock gardens, as it prefers sandy soils of poor fertility. In our humid climate, the plants tend to open up in the center towards mid summer. Prune them back hard at this time, or prune more lightly, several times, earlier in the season, to encourage fresh, bushy new growth.

Cerastium tomentosum (Snow-in-Summer)

Growing only about a half foot tall, and spreading, this plant makes a good groundcover for a hot, sunny area, and is pretty when planted to tumble over the edge of a rock wall or to soften the hard lines of a walkway. As a bonus, its woolly silver foliage is covered with dainty white flowers in late spring to early summer. Plant Snow-in-Summer in full sun and prune back after flowering to keep the foliage fresh.



Artemisia 'Silver Mound' is nice at the front of a border.

Lychnis coronaria (Rose Campion)

This plant reaches two to three feet tall, with an upright, branched habit. Its silver-gray foliage is strikingly beautiful, and it bears brilliant, magenta-colored flowers in June, a hot touch of color sure to liven up the garden. Although it is relatively short-lived, it typically self-seeds, making it a lasting addition to the garden. It is not demanding, but prefers full sun.

Stachys byzantia (Lamb's Ear)

Grow this plant for its large, soft, velvet-like leaves that lend a coarse texture to the border. When planted in a hot colored garden, these plants lend a cooling effect. Helene von Stein holds up well under humid conditions; Silver Carpet is a shorter, non-flowering form. Plant Lamb's Ear in a sunny, well-drained location, in lower fertility soil. Deadhead any flowers that begin to form, and pick off any leaves that rot during humid or rainy periods.

Thymus pseudolanuginosis (Woolly Mother-of-Thyme)

This mat forming plant stays very

low, growing only about two or three inches tall. The woolly, silvery gray foliage is aromatic, and in early summer it bears tiny, rose pink flowers. Plant it between stepping-stones, as it will take light foot traffic. It is also a good choice for rock gardens or pockets in a garden wall. Full sun, good drainage, and soil of low fertility are what this plant wants.

Annuals

Dichondra Silver Falls

Relatively new to the market, this is a great choice for containers, window boxes or hanging baskets. Its pretty, silvery leaves are heart-shaped, and when its long, trailing stems are allowed to tumble over the sides of a container, it creates a shimmering, waterfall effect. It can also be used as an annual groundcover, though it is not tolerant of regular foot traffic. It mixes well with just about any

sun-loving plant, and is good for filling in gaps in containers or in the garden. Provide it with full to part sun and an occasional application of fertilizer.

Helichrysum petiolare (Licorice Plant)

Another trailer good for baskets and containers, Licorice plant has a vigorous, mounding habit with rounded, fuzzy, silvery leaves. It prefers full sun and sharp drainage, but is otherwise undemanding.

Plectranthus Silver Shield

This fast-growing plant lends a bold feel to large containers or the garden. It features downy, gray-green leaves, growing up to three or four feet tall, and nearly as wide. It prefers full to part sun and is quite drought tolerant once established.

Senecio cineraria (Dusty Miller)

An old favorite, this annual is a good choice for those looking for an upright, mounded element. It grows about a foot tall, and its lacy, silvery foliage provides welcome contrast to green-leafed companions. Silver Lace is a fine textured variety; Silver Dust has a coarser look. Grow in moderately fertile, well-drained soil in full sun.

Herbs

The herb section is a great place to find silvery plants. Many of these need not be relegated to the herb garden, as they combine beautifully with sun loving annuals or perennials in the border or containers, and they provide a variety of forms and textures too. Some to check out include Curry Plant, Lavender, Lavender Cotton, Sage and Dittany of Crete.