

PLANT PAIRING GUIDE



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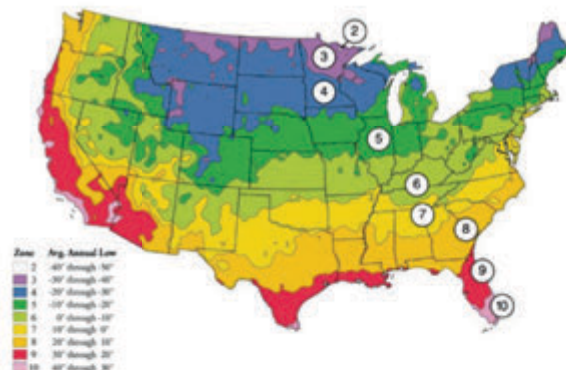


Learn to pair plants for maximum impact and interest in your garden—for all four seasons!

Welcome to my plant pairing guide, where you'll find amazing plant combinations that you can try in your own garden. Each combination is marked with the high interest season, hardiness zone and amount of light needed.

If you don't know you're hardiness zone, head over to planthardiness.ars.usda.gov and put in your zip code to find out. All of the combinations are labeled by these numbers.

Not only are these pairings beautiful & low maintenance, but all plants you'll see in this guide have multiple seasons of interest.



Find your gardening zone by zip code at planthardiness.ars.usda.gov



What does that mean, exactly? It means that every plant has unique features that will keep your garden interesting in at **LEAST** two of four seasons (most of them more). So, if you have a small space or just want the most bang for your buck... this is the perfect guide for you. Enjoy!
-Amy

Using contrast in the garden

The biggest concept to understand when learning about plant combinations is contrast. Contrast is simply the scale of **how similar or how different two things are from one another**.

When combining plants, the four types of contrast I like to use are color, texture, leaf size and form (shape).





spring

Full-Part Sun

Zones 5-8

Season: Early Spring

Plants:

- 'Myretoun Ruby' Winter Heath (*Erica carnea*),
Zones 5-8, 8" H x 20" W,
Winter-Early Spring,
Full-Part Sun
- Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*),
Zones 5-8, 6-10" H x 12-18"
W, Winter-Late Spring,
Full-Part Sun

Winter Heath & Wood Anemone

Try this sparkling spring border by pairing bright pink Winter Heath 'Myretoun Ruby' and the white poppy-like flowers of the Wood Anemone.

By the way, Heaths are a great four season plant that have the ability to change color year-round. This particular variety blooms heavily from mid winter to late spring (Jan-May).

Photo Credit: Gardenia.net



spring

Full-Part Sun
Zones 5-8
Season: Spring

Plants:

- 'Orange Emperor' Tulip (Fosteriana tulip), Zones 3-8, 14-16" H, Early Spring, Full-Part Sun
- 'Water' Forget-Me-Nots (Myosotis scorpioides), Zones -5-9, 6-12" H x 12" W, Full-Part Sun

Tulips & Forget-Me-Nots

A great tulip variety to try is 'Orange Emperor' Foster Tulip, which is a hardy variety that's likely to thrive for several years. The bare ground beneath tulips can be dressed up with Forget-Me-Nots.

The perennial forget-me-not flower 'Water' spreads easily, freely self-seeding for more of the wildflower to grow and bloom in shady spots where the tiny seeds may fall. Scatter the seeds thickly over the tulip bed in autumn for a carpet of spring blooms.

Photo Credit: Pixy.org



spring

Full Sun

Zones 4-8

Season: Spring

Plants:

- 'Blue Jacket' Hyacinth (*Hyacinthus orientalis*), Zones 4-8, 6-10" H, Mid Spring, Full Sun
- 'Apricot Beauty' Tulip (*Tulipa*), Zones 3-8, 18" H, Early-Mid Spring, Full-Part Sun

'Hyacinths & Tulips

These two flower bulbs combine to create a captivating scene in the garden. Sweetly scented, soft-colored 'Apricot Beauty' tulip team up with the very fragrant, deep-blue blossoming 'Blue Jacket' Hyacinth to put on a stunning mid-spring show for you.

Photo Credit: Gardenia.net



spring

Part Sun

Zones 3-7

Season: Late Spring

Plants:

- 'Rosy Lights' Azalea (Rhododendron), Zones 3-7, 4-6' H x 4-6' W, Late Spring-Early Summer, Full-Part Sun
- Ostrich Fern (Matteuccia struthiopteris), Zones 3-7, 3-6' H x 5-8' W, Part Sun-Shade

Azaleas & Ferns

Blooming in late spring, the large-leaved rhododendron/azalea variety 'Rosy Lights' has spectacular displays of huge flower clusters. The dark green, leathery leaves are effective for year-round interest and contrasts nicely with the texture and color of underplanted bright green ostrich ferns.

Photo Credit: Donna Reagan, from Azalea Walk Reserve-Gibson County, Indiana



spring

Full Sun

Zones 4-8

Season: Spring, Summer,
Fall

Plants:

- 'Blue Star' Juniper
(*Juniperus squamata*),
Zones 4-8, 2-3' H x 3-4'
W, All year, Full Sun
- Sedum 'Angelina'
Stonecrop (*Sedum
rupestre*), Zones 4-9, 3-6"
H x 18-24" W, Full-Part
Sun
- Lamb's Ear 'Big Ears'
(*Stachys byzantina*),
Zones 4-9, 6-12" H x 12-
24" W, Full-Part Sun

Juniper, Sedum & Lamb's Ear

A beautiful combination that lasts for all 4 seasons. In this photo, 'Blue Star' Juniper, sedum 'Angelina' and Lamb's Ear 'Big Ears' are all tipped with morning frost. The texture and color differences make this combination work in any dry and sunny garden. And, because it relies on foliage contrast, it looks great from spring through fall. The juniper and sedum will continue to provide interest in winter.

Photo Credit: Amy Fedele, PrettyPurpleDoor



summer

Full Sun

Zones 4-9

Season: Summer-Early Fall

Plants:

- Purple Coneflower
(*Echinacea purpurea* (L.)
Moench), Zones 4-9, 2-5'
H x 2' W, Mid-Spring -
Early Fall, Full-Part Sun
- Black-Eyed Susan
(*Rudbeckia hirta*), Zones
3-9, 24" H x 2-3' W, Early
Summer-Fall, Full-Sun

Coneflowers & Black-Eyed Susans

If you want a colorful garden but don't have a lot of time to fuss over it, try this combination of the easy-care classics: purple coneflower and black-eyed Susan.

Both of these perennial plants are heat- and drought-resistant and bloom from summer to fall with minimum care. Clip their blooms to make beautiful bouquets you can enjoy all summer.

Photo Credit: TerracareLandscape.net



summer

Part Sun-Shade

Zones 4-8

Season: Mid-Late Summer

Plants:

- 'Endless Summer'
Hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*), Zones 4-9, 3-4' H x 3-4' W, Mid-Late Summer, Part Sun
- 'Visions' Astilbe
(*Astilbe chinensis Visions*), Zones 4-8, 16" H, Mid-Late Summer, Part Sun-Shade

Hydrangea & Astilbe

Make your shade garden glow with this stunning border of Hydrangea 'Endless Summer' and deep purple Astilbe 'Visions.' I love how the large leaves of the hydrangea create a perfect backdrop for the contrasting spikes of purple astilbe.

An added bonus of this combo (as if it needs one) is that it attracts butterflies!

Photo Credit: The Carter Rohrer Co., Atlanta



summer

Full Sun
Zones 5-9
Season: Summer

Plants:

- 'Boulder Blue' Fescue (*Festuca glauca*), Zones 4-9, 12" H x 12" W, Spring-Summer, Full-Part Sun
- 'African Bride' Love in the Mist (*Nigella papillosa*), Hardy Annual, 2-2.5'H x 1' W, Spring-Summer, Full Sun
- Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*), Zones 5-9, 3-4'H x 3' W, Mid-Summer-Fall, Full Sun

Blue Fescue, Love in the Mist & Sage

What a dreamy combination for a meadow garden. Boulder Blue Fescue grass works its way through the center of the garden surrounded by the white blooms of Love in the Mist (right) and flowy wands of purple Russian sage (left). This is a really relaxed and free-flowing combination with smaller scale plants that's easy to try at home.

Photo Credit: @fromthegardenshed on Instagram



summer

Full Sun

Zones 5-9

Season: Summer

Plants:

- 'Hello Yellow'
Blackberry Lily
(*Iris domestica*), Zones 5-10, 2-3' H x 18-24" W, Mid-Late Summer, Full Sun
- 'Blue Jean Baby' Russian Sage (*Salvia yangii*), Zones 4-9, 2.5' H x 2-3' W, Mid-Summer-Fall, Full Sun

Blackberry Lily & Sage

Iris domestica, commonly called blackberry lily or leopard lily blooms with deep orange flowers (to 2" across), heavily spotted with red dots. In late summer, flowers give way to seed pods that split open to reveal a blackberry-like seed cluster.

Looks great when paired with the beautiful and complementary 'Blue Jean Baby' Russian sage. Blue Jean Baby blooms in lavender-blue flower spikes from midsummer all the way into fall, providing nectar that feeds the bees and butterflies. Oh, and it smells great too!

Photo Credit: Flickr @swelleganza



fall

Full-Part Sun

Zones 5-9

Season: Late Summer-
Early Fall

Plants:

- 'Royal Purple' Smoke Tree (*Cotinus coggygria*), Zones 5-9, 15' H x 12' W, Full-Part Sun
- 'Orange Skipper' Coneflower (*Echinacea*), Zones 5-9, 18" H x 18" W, Mid-Spring - Early Fall, Full-Part Sun
- Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), Zones 3-9, 24" H x 2-3' W, Early Summer-Fall, Full-Sun

Smoke Tree, Coneflowers & Black-Eyed Susans

Can't get enough of coneflowers and black-eyed susans? Neither can I. I just love how different this combination is than the previous one, though. It's a really fiery and bold pairing of the deep purple-red of the smoke tree mixed with golden black-eyed susans and a red-tangerine coneflowers. The orange coneflowers can be swapped with heleniums for a similar look.

Photo Credit: AGrowingObsession.com



fall

Full Sun
Zones 6-9
Season: Fall

Plants:

- Saffron Crocus (*Crocus sativus*), Zones 6-9, 4-6" H, Fall, Full Sun
- October Daphne Stonecrop (*sedum sieboldii*), Zones 3-9, 6-10" H x 12-18" W, Fall, Full Sun

Crocus & Stonecrop

Saffron crocus blooms in autumn when tree leaves are starting to color and drop. Its lavender flowers look pretty with the smaller pink flowers from October Daphne Stonecrop, a variety of sedum.

Unfortunately this variety of crocus is only hardy in zones 6-9.

As an alternative, planting sedum with daylilies has always been a favorite combination of mine. The sedum and daylily combination is hardy in zones 3-9.

Photo Credit: The Four Season Landscape, p203



fall/winter

Full-Part Sun
Zones 3-7
Season: Fall/Winter

Paper White Birch & 'Red Twig Dogwood

Plants:

- Paper White Birch (*Betula papyrifera*), Zones 2-7, 40-70' H x 25-50' W, Spring-Winter, Full Sun
- 'Cardinal' Red Twig Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), Zones 3-8, 6-9' H x 8-12' W, Fall-Winter, Full-Part Sun

Where there's smoke, there's fire.

The Paper White Birch Tree & Cardinal Red Twig Dogwood create a contrast that will enliven any winter landscape. The birch planted between the dogwood and the background evergreens brings out the similar forms and branching patterns that make the birch tree look like white "smoke" rising from the red twig dogwood's "flames".

Photo Credit: Tumblr @rubydusted



winter

Full-Part Sun
Zones 5-7
Season: Winter

Plants:

- Japanese Silver Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*), Zones 5-9, 3-6' H x 3-5' W, Full Sun
- 'Fat Albert' Colorado Spruce (*Picea pungens*), Zones 3-7, 10-15' H x 7-10' W, Full Sun

Silver Grass & Colorado Spruce

For a striking winter scene, combine tall grasses with blue evergreens like the Japanese Silver Grass* and 'Fat Albert' Colorado Spruce*. Bleached to a light-reflecting, wheat-colored fountain of dried foliage and flowers, Japanese Silver Grass* stands tall and showy all winter. I like the spruce variety 'Fat Albert*' which is very dense, very blue and very slow-growing (only 3-4 inches per year until it reaches 15 feet).

*Note: These are substitutions for plants pictured above - although they are very similar in style/feel.

Photo Credit: HouseLogic.com, Creative Commons

Want to Learn More?

If you liked these plant combinations and you dream of creating a beautiful, unique garden that has color and interest in all four seasons, you'll absolutely love my [Design Your 4-Season Garden Course](https://www.purplepurpledoor.com/course).

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