

DESIGNING FOR WINTER COLOUR AND INTEREST

Many gardens look stunning during the summer months and drab all winter long. But there's plenty that can be done to create colour and interest in the garden during the winter months.

Due to the short days and bad weather, it is unlikely that you will spend much time in the garden in winter so there's no point going over the top with plants for winter interest across the whole garden. But it's best to concentrate on areas around and close to the house that can be seen and appreciated from inside.

Winter interest can come from a number of different ways. It can be from winter flowers, evergreen plants, planted containers and even coloured and interesting bark/stems.

WINTER FLOWERS

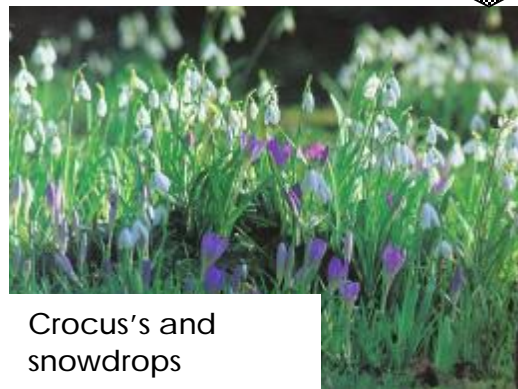
There are a number of plants that flower in the winter, and unlike summer flowers they tend to last longer and be more fragrant as they need to entice the few insects that are about. There is also a limited colour palette available with mostly whites and yellows.

A mass of winter colour can be achieved by naturalizing bulbs such as *Galanthus nivalis* (snowdrop) and crocus species under trees and in the lawn.

Winter flowering shrubs also have a great impact in the garden especially the ones that flower on bare stems like the *Rhododendron mucronulatum* (pictured), *Hamamelis* (witch hazels) and *Daphne*.



Rhododendron mucronulatum



Crocus's and snowdrops

Ilex x altaclarensis 'Golden King'; as well as being evergreen it has variegated foliage with winter berries. Ideal for use as a specimen shrub or as a hedge for year round screening

BARK / STEMS



Cornus stems

There are enough colours provided by the dogwood's to suit any situation



Acer griseum

Some of the best winter colours and interests come from the bark and stems, with the most striking winter display coming from the dogwood's.

A good winter feature is the bark of the slow growing *Acer griseum* (paper bark maple). It will be a focal and talking point in any planting scheme.



Cornus alba 'Sibirica'

The brilliant *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica' provides a blaze of colour against the creamy plumes of the *Cortaderia selloana*. The true effect of the cornus can be best achieved by planting on a bank.

EVERGREEN PLANTS

Evergreen plants provide year round interest in the garden and in the winter they help to provide structure, colour, screening and fill otherwise bare spaces.

The structural quality of the evergreen *Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Purple' is even more enhanced when outlined with frost.



Cotinus coggygria 'Royal Purple'



Ilex x altaclarensis 'Golden King'

The amount of evergreen plants is vast and can range from large conifers to small low growing heathers with plenty to choose between.

CONTAINERS

Winter interest can be brought into the garden by the introduction of well-planted containers, which can help brighten up a dull patio area.

The containers are best planted with winter bulbs or pansies for flower colour, alongside some evergreen foliage.

This blue and silver themed container contains *Juniperus squamata* 'Blue Carpet', *Abies concolor* 'Compacta', *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Munstead', *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Silver Queen', *Hebe albicans* 'Snow Cover', *Hebe recurva* and *Iris* 'Harmony'



A winter container