



TREE NEWS

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YOU CAN USE

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

ENVISIONING YOUR MOSAIC PALETTE FOR YOUR GARDEN

History of garden mosaics

A mosaic is defined as a picture or pattern produced by arranging small, colored pieces of hard material, such as stone, tile or glass ([dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com)). Since ancient times, mosaics have been created and used decoratively. Examples include Romans creating indoor and outdoor walls, floors, ceilings and gardens; Greeks using sea pebbles to create pictorial mosaics that told stories or the Spanish artist Gaudi using recycled and found material for mosaic installations in Barcelona.

Creating your garden mosaic

How do we apply or adapt the mosaic concept to a mosaic palette for your flowering garden? Easy, we would say! By using your imagination, you can introduce more color with a decorative array of plants and hard materials. Start first with the plant selection. Use contrasting colors, textures, leaf sizes and plant forms to make impressive plant combinations for your flowering garden. A good flower garden design would use:

- 1) a mixture of height, colors and textures;
- 2) deep borders to hold more plants;
- 3) repetition of plants, shapes and colors throughout the garden to give continuity and;
- 4) height matters so pay attention to height depth.

The design for the hard material can be simply decorative or represent natural elements. Mosaic project ideas for hard materials in your garden include stepping-stones, seating, terracotta pots and planters and murals.

How to start

Remember the success of any garden design is tied to the health of the plants. Consider the amount of sun exposure your garden receives, how quickly the soil drains, the plant hardiness zone and other environmental conditions that may influence plant health! Familiarity with your garden's growing conditions will allow you to search for plants with a higher probability of success.

Once you have a list of plants, it's time to start thinking artistically! What are your goals for the space? Will this be a strictly aesthetic area, or should you plan for functionality such as seating? Do you intend to add any hardscape or paths to your design? Are you considering accent pieces or additions like wind chimes and bird feeders? During this phase, you might consider looking at other gardens for inspiration. Pay attention to what you like including plant selection, color choice, inorganic material, function and texture.

Now that you have a list of plants and materials, you can begin finalizing your design and planting your garden! Remember that while inorganic design pieces may be installed at any point, plants tend to be more successful if installed at certain times of the year. Growing and tending any garden is a process. Pace yourself and have fun!



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