



Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert

Winter Color Combinations

We often think of winter as a down time for color in the landscape. However, there are numerous desert-adapted plants that provide a wealth of color to our desert gardens during this cooler part of the year. Here are some suggested plant combinations to consider for a colorful winter display.

- **Chuparosa (*Justicia californica*) & Brittle Bush (*Encelia farinosa*)**
These two Arizona native shrubs provide great contrasting color. The bright red flowers of Chuparosa, which attract hummingbirds, provide marked contrast to the brilliant yellow flowers of Brittle Bush.
- **Red & Yellow Chuparosa (*Justicia californica*)**
The brilliant red flowers of typical Chuparosa interplanted with its yellow-flowered clone, create a striking combination from early winter through mid-spring.
- **Pea Bush (*Dalea pulchra*) & Fairy Duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*)**
The Fairy Duster's deep green foliage and pink flowers, which attract hummingbirds, together with the gray foliage and purplish-pink flowers of Pea Bush, an Arizona native, make an excellent combination.
- **Lilac Vine (*Hardenbergia comptoniana*) & Trailing Gazania (*Gazania rigens*)**
The iridescent purple flowers and the deep green of the Australian Lilac Vine contrast well with the gray foliage and yellow flowers of Trailing Gazania.
- **Desert Lavender (*Hyptis emoryi*) & White Plumbago (*Plumbago scandens*)**
Plumbago develops a bronze-purple foliage in the winter, offering a great contrast to the soft gray-silver leaves of Desert Lavender.
- **Purple Prickly Pear (*Opuntia santa-rita*) & Damianita (*Chrysactinia mexicana*)**
During winter, Purple Prickly Pear turns a deep purple color. The intense green foliage and yellow flowers of Damianita, a ground-covering shrub, provide distinctive contrast.
- **Firecracker Penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*) & Angelita Daisy (*Hymenoxys acaulis*)**
An excellent wildflower combination for early winter color. The brilliant red, hummingbird-attracting flowers of the Arizona native perennial Firecracker Penstemon, set among the intense yellow flowers of Angelita Daisy, a ground covering perennial which flowers nearly year round, creates a stunning combination.
- **Firecracker Penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*) & Golden Barrel (*Echinocactus grusonii*)**
The deep yellow spination of Golden Barrel, contrasting with the brilliant red flowers of Firecracker Penstemon, creates a unique floral and foliage combination. Golden Barrels lend themselves to mass planting, in three, five, seven or more plants, for significant impact in the landscape. When interplanted with Firecracker Penstemon, the two create a spectacular red-yellow landscape combination.
- **Firecracker Penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*) & Desert Marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*)**
A late winter and early spring Arizona wildflower combination, with the gray foliage and yellow flowers of Desert Marigold in contrast to the green foliage and red flowers of Firecracker Penstemon.
- **Aloe (*Aloe ferox*–*Aloe dawei*) & Blue Euphorbia (*Euphorbia rigida*)**
One of the best early winter color combinations. Attractive to hummingbirds, the brilliant red-orange flowers of Tree Aloe, a South African leaf succulent, contrast with the outstanding citron-yellow flowers of Blue Euphorbia, a groundcover from the Mediterranean region.