**12 months of color**

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If one of your New Year’s Resolutions was to beautify your landscape by having the plants necessary to have 12 months of color, here are some ideas. Many of the plants can be planted now for blooms throughout the year.

January is usually the toughest month to have color. In many cases, we rely on pansies, cyclamen and other cold weather annuals. For a perennial, plant a drift or two of paperwhites. The forced bulbs on sale at area supermarkets and nurseries work fine. Plant them directly into the landscape now. Make sure the leaves are allowed to brown naturally before they are cut back.

The cold weather annuals will continue to bloom in February but you can also use Texas or Mexican redbuds and cemetery iris. Plant redbuds under large shade trees and plant the iris in full sun. The iris rhizome should be planted so the top is level with the soil surface.

Texas mountain laurel is a drought-tolerant evergreen shrub that produces purple blooms in February. Quite often you can smell the flowers before you see them. They smell like grape Kool-Aid. Plant Texas mountain laurel in full sun.

Spring bouquet viburnum buds are pink and very showy. They are followed by white flowers and black berries.

March is a good bloom period for winter annuals along with naturalized larkspur and the wildflowers coreopsis, primrose and verbena. Salvia greggii is an early spring bloomer in red, pink or white. It is a shrub that is not eaten by deer.

Cross vine has rust-colored blooms in March. If you prefer a more apricot-colored flower, select the “Apricot Beauty” selection. Texas Gold Columbine provides maiden hair fern-like foliage in the shade in the fall, winter and spring. In March shooting star-like yellow blooms rise out of the foliage on 3 ft. stalks.

April is the bluebonnet month and it is also when the tough modern roses like Carefree Beauty (Katy Road), Belindas Dream and Knockout roses begin blooming. Dutch irises do most of their blooming in April. Dutch iris are also deer-proof plants.

Coral vine can take over your yard, but all is forgiven once the small pink flowers cover the high climbing vine.

The roses are spectacular in May. It is also time to plant zinnias for summer color. In addition to the tough modern roses, the long-blooming, old-fashioned roses such as butterfly rose and Martha Gonzales rose will be showy. Daylilies provide yellow and orange blooms in May.

June is also a good month for the yellow flowers of butterfly vine. If you prefer purple flowers, plant passion-vine.

The hot weather starts in earnest in June but so do the esperanza and firebush blooms. The zinnias will be showy in the garden and are good cut flowers. June is also a good time to plant vinca for hot weather color.

Poinciana is a hot weather bloomer that makes a show in July. Its glow in the dark orange-red flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

In August the blue salvias join the other hot weather blooming plants. Indigo Spires is large (6 ft.). Some of the salvia farinacea selections are small, disciplined growers. All prosper in the heat.

September is another good month for color from salvias. Salvia greggii and the blue salvia are joined by lantanas for color in the landscape.

If red is your favorite color, reserve a spot in the deep shade for the firespike. The shiny green foliage is showy itself but the deep red blooms that arise out of the leaves on tall spikes are especially attractive. They even do well in a container.

October is a colorful month for roses. Give the modern roses and the old-fashioned roses an application of lawn fertilizer to support the fall bloom period.

If you have fall asters, they can steal the show in November. Pick a hot spot in full sun for them to be at their best.

November is also the month for cape honeysuckle blooms to be at their best. The small tubular orange flowers cover the vine-like stems.

Berries help meet the bill for color in December. Pyracantha, standard nandina, standard yaupon and bur ford holly all have red berries. Calomondin will be covered with golf ball size orange fruit and duranta has showy yellow berries.