

"Consumer Talk" appears in each issue of Lawn & Garden Retailer to examine the issues facing today's garden center customers. Our panel of consumers will provide you with insight into their gardening and retail experiences to help you better understand today's customers' needs.

Color Their World

You try to stay up on all the latest trends in breeding, design and color to paint a beautiful picture for your customers. We asked our panel where else they go to inspire their gardens and outdoor living.

Jen, 31
Glenwood, Iowa

For the summer months, I like a lot of color in my yard. We spend a lot of time outdoors, so it's nice to see so much color! I typically purchase bright red, pink and purple annuals to put in planters around the deck and porch areas. The perennials in my yard were planted with color in mind. I have purple irises up against my house's white siding, which makes the plants seem even more colorful. Daylilies are my favorite, so I use several different colors of these in various parts of the yard. They are clustered by color. Since I have planned the perennials' colors, I am able to change my annuals' color schemes from year to year.



Liz, 31
Aurora, Colo.

I get inspiration for the color in my garden from a lot of places. My boyfriend is a fan of our Colorado Rockies baseball team, so I have actually been looking to plant more purple this year. It might sound funny, but with his birthday being in June, already having color in the yard helps me decorate for the party! I like to find color not only in the flowers but also in the veggies I grow and in the leaves of the plants. So while I have irises, lilac, and dark pansies and petunias, I also have groundcovers with dark-purple leaves and eggplants. It's neat to see flowers of one color turn into vegetables of another too. Of course, I do like to offset the purples with brighter things like orange calendulas and white daisies, and at times there's something at the store that just looks so brilliant, like the gorgeous coral roses, that I can't pass up purchasing it. I also try to plan so that I have color from spring through fall; I look to find blooms at varying parts of the year that complement one another and foliage that remains even when a plant is past its flowering stage.



Luis, 77
Rockford, Ill.

My method for choosing colors for the garden isn't very scientific. Although I know about the use of the color wheel and the value of selecting complementary colors, I seldom refer to it for picking garden colors. I just generally pick what looks good to me. I am influenced by what is available in the nurseries and what color combinations look appealing there. I use lots of whites and yellows in the shade just because they show up better. Elsewhere, I generally use lots of pinks of various shades, just because it's a color I like (my wife thinks a bit too much), but also because there are a lot of colors that can go well with it. I don't believe one should be so rigid in color choices and combinations. When all is said and done, it's what pleases the eye of the gardener that's most important.



Questions to Consider

- How much of a priority is color selection for you when placing orders from growers?
- Do you arrange and merchandise your green goods by color?
- Do you keep up with color trends and use them when deciding which colors to offer?
- How do you inspire your customers with great color combinations?