



Foliage First –CA style

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Take your containers and gardens from predictable to exceptional by focusing on ***foliage first***. These three easy steps will set you on the right path;

1. **Spotlight** –*focus on the details.*

Learn to read the color cues from buds, bark, stems, veins and foliage – rarely is the leaf “just green”.

What does the leaf look like (form and texture)? Is it big and bold? Fine and wispy? Does it have a shiny or dull surface? Is it spiky or soft?

Sometimes a black and white photo can help you see the garden in a new way without the distraction of color. This is especially useful when trying to figure out a problem area.

2. **Highlight**– *less is more (to start with)*

What colors did you see in your inspiration plant? Repeat these colors at least once more in your combination. You can go lighter or darker but stay in the same color family. Starting with a multicolored or variegated plant can help you get a feel for this.

If you are creating a container combination, use the color of the pot as part of your design.

Start by building a simple, monochromatic combination to gain confidence.

3. **Limelight**– *showtime!*

Take your basic group from above and try adding one contrast color. Perhaps that color was already suggested by one of the other plants? Or maybe you just want to throw in a wild card?

Keep to a total of three different colors (+ green) in any one combination. E.g. rich burgundy, steel blue and shimmering silver (like the **Gardening with Foliage First** book cover)

Remember to keep an interesting variety of textures and shapes as you add in more color.

SPOTLIGHT – color details

Canna ‘Tropicanna’

Echeveria nodulosa

Sedum t. ‘Autumn Charm’

Opuntia violacea var. *santarita*

Eldorado Swiss chard

Rosa sericea ssp. *omeiensis* f. *pteracantha*,
Euphorbia milii

Portulaca oleracea ‘Hot Shot Flambeau Rose’

Caryopteris x c. ‘Lil Miss Sunshine’

Abelia x g. ‘Kaleidoscope’

Sedum m. ‘Ogon’

-texture

Agave o. ‘Frosty Blue’

Encephalartos horridus

Mahonia e. ‘Soft Caress’

Artemisia s. ‘Silver Mound’

Nassella tenuissima

Echeveria ‘Round leaf’

Anthurium ‘Dakota’

-form

Lagerstroemia ‘Moonlight Magic’

Agave

Sedum r. ‘Angelina’

HIGHLIGHT

Possibly *Agave* ‘Blue Glow’

Yellow pot with misc.

Alocasia ‘Polly’, *Begonia rex*, *Solenostemon s.*
“Merlot” in black pot

Aloe saponaria and sandstone path

Aloe (unknown species & variety)

Hydrangea with *Festuca*, *Hydrangea p.* ‘Fire and Ice’ with *Euphorbia* ‘Purple Preference’

Agave americana ‘Variegata’, *Acacia*
cultriformis, *Myrtus c.* ‘Variegata’

Yucca f. ‘Color Guard’, *Chamaecyparis p.*
‘Filifera Aurea’, *Coleonema p.* ‘Sunset Gold’

Echeveria ‘Blue Wave’, *Sedum morganianum*

LIMELIGHT

-container designs

Assorted *Echeveria* and misc.

Pennisetum s. rubrum, *Helichrysum petiolare*

Phygellus ‘Sunshine’, *Hebe* ‘Champion’,
Euphorbia ‘Ascot Rainbow’, *Phormium* ‘Tricolor’

Anthurium ‘Dakota’, *Solenostemon s.* ‘Lava
Rose’, *Vinca m.* ‘Illumination’

Dianella ‘Clarity Blue’, *Lavandula* ‘Meerlo’,
Oreganum x ‘Amethyst Falls’

Dianella ‘Clarity Blue’, *Lavandula* ‘Meerlo’,
Lomandra ‘Platinum Beauty’, *Ceanothus*,

Caryopteris ‘Lil Miss Sunshine’, *Potentilla*
‘Happy Face Yellow’, *Ceanothus*, *Loropetalum*

Succulents with *Ophiopogon p.* ‘Nigrescens’

Melianthus major, *Echeveria elegans*, *Begonia*
b. ‘Bonfire’

Caladium bicolor, *Calathea* ‘Dottie’, *Perilla*
‘Magilla’ *Athyrium* ‘Ghost’

Canna ‘Tropicanna’, *Dahlia* ‘Bishop of Llandaff’,
Knipophia ‘Mango Popsicle’ et al

-Landscape vignettes

Assd. herbs with rustic green pot & *Juncus*

Cotinus x *Grace*, *Helenium* 'Mardi Gras',
Rudbeckia f. var. s. 'Goldsturm' et al

Artemisia s. 'Quicksilver', variegated sedum,
Potentilla f. variety

Rosa sericea ssp. *omeiensis* f. *pteracantha*,
Opuntia, *Nassella tenuissima*

Artemisia canescens, *Sedum* 'Autumn Joy',
Romneya coulteri

Mahonia 'Soft Caress' *Ceanothus* 'Diamond
Heights', *Loropetalum* c.

Opuntia, *Amsonia hubrichtii*, *Yucca* r. 'Sapphire
Skies'. *Rhamnus* f. 'Fine Line', *Euphorbia rigida*,
Daphne x *houtteana*, *Agave* o. 'Frosty Blue',

Puya sp. (Huntingdon Botanical Gardens)

Agave, barrel cactus, *Cleistocactus strausii*,
Aeonium (HBG)

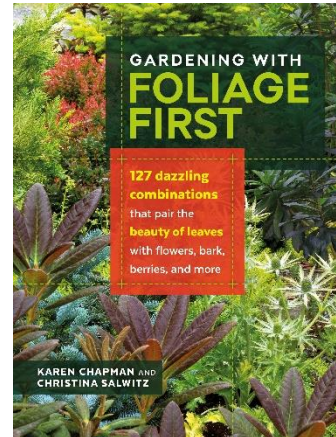
JUST FOR FUN

Laura Eubanks succulent tapestry

Bust with foliage flapper-style head band

Bougainvillea 'Pixie Queen' and flamingos!

Want more ideas? Take me home with you!



Purchase a signed copy of my NEW book
Gardening with Foliage First, co-authored with
Christina Salwitz. \$25 cash or check

Keep in touch:

I love to share news & ideas with fellow
gardeners.

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