



# Seasonal Color Combinations with Desert Adapted Plants

## Winter

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 also 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 make a great combination with its yellow flower clone from early winter through mid-spring.
- **Pea Bush (*Dalea pulchra*) & Fairy Duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*).** The deep green foliage and pink flowers of Fairy Duster, which also attract hummingbirds, makes an excellent combination with the gray foliage and purplish-pink flowers of Pea Bush, an Arizona native.
- **Lilac Vine (*Hardenbergia comptoniana*) & Trailing Gazania (*Gazania rigens*).** The deep green Australian Lilac Vine with iridescent purple flowers contrasts 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 is the brilliant red flowers of the Arizona native perennial, Firecracker Penstemon, which also attracts hummingbirds, in stunning combination with the intense yellow flowers of Angelita Daisy, a ground covering perennial which flowers nearly year round.
- **Firecracker Penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*) & Golden Barrel (*Echinocactus grusonii*).** A different floral and foliage combination with the deep yellow spination of Golden Barrel in contrast to the brilliant red flowers of Firecracker Penstemon. Golden Barrels lend themselves to mass planting in three, five, seven or more plants for significant impact in the landscape and when interplanted with Firecracker Penstemon, make for 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. Brilliant red-orange flowers of Tree Aloe, a South African leaf succulent, that also attracts hummingbirds, in contrast to the outstanding citron-yellow flowers of Blue Euphorbia, a groundcover from the Mediterranean region.