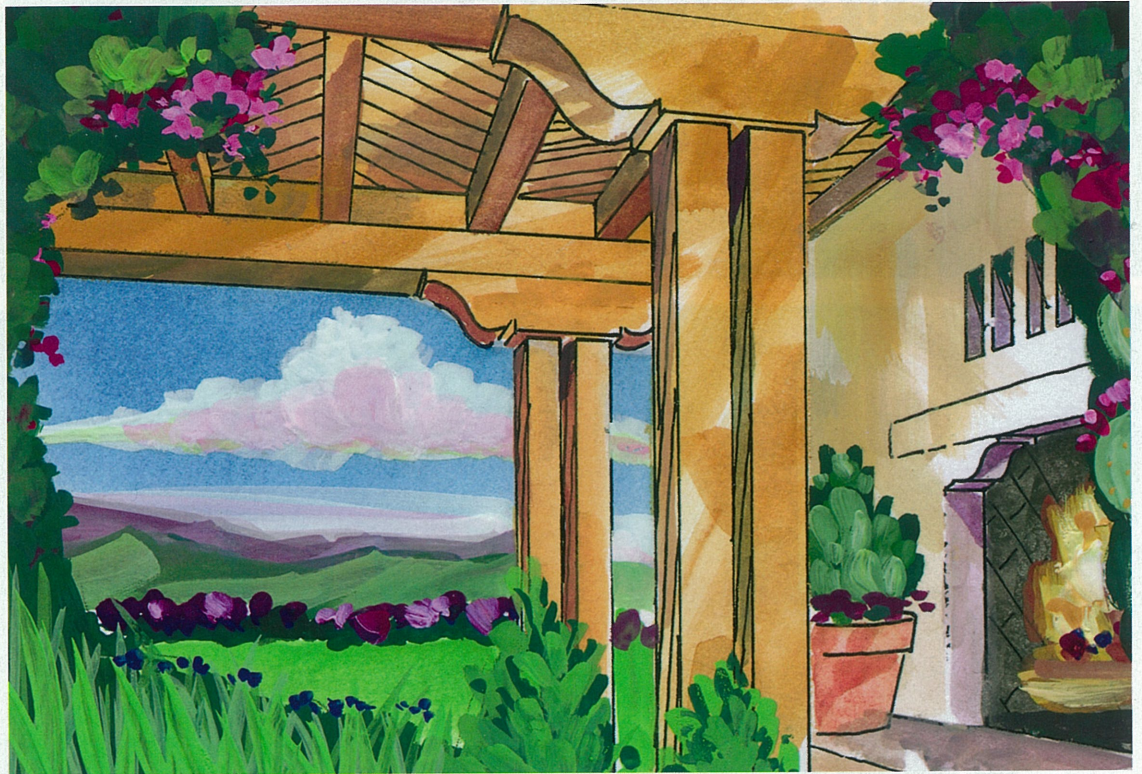


? winter warmth

Can you please offer some suggestions for giving a garden a warmer, more substantial feel for the winter months? Also, are there any plants other than annual flowers that will give us winter color?



Text by Troy Bankord • Illustration by Clint Miller

Putting a coat of color on your concrete block wall can be the first step toward creating a warm, intimate garden space. Darker earth tones and jewel tones are preferable, since they are less reflective than light colors. They also provide a dramatic backdrop for lush plantings, and appear to recede at night, giving the illusion of a larger garden.

Here are some other ideas:

- A sure way to create a cozy garden is to add an outdoor fireplace or fire pit.
- Covering a patio floor with stone will lend warmth and texture.
- To bring visual significance to the garden, try adding chunky gravel, river rock or boulders to planting beds and landscaped areas.
- Consider introducing wood items—columns, vigas, arbors and gates—to dress up an outdoor area.
- For visual weight, include iron accessories such as candleholders, plant stands, trellises, decorative grilles and finials, as well as iron furniture.
- Dried branches, wreaths, greens, fruit or yucca spears set in interesting containers will add sculptural drama.

- Hanging a candle chandelier infuses an outdoor entertaining area with charm.

Instead of bringing in annuals for seasonal color, try groupings of robust plantings, such as agave, asparagus fern, cardboard palms, grasses, *Liriope gigantea*, *Myrtus boetica*, sago, tropical bird of paradise, or yucca.

Perennials that bloom during winter can provide color, as can those with foliage that changes with the seasons. For a vibrant winter palette, try alyssum, germander, gopher plant (*Euphorbia lathyris*), *Muhlenbergia capillaris*, *M. rigens*, *Nandina domestica* (heavenly bamboo), photinia, purple fountain grass, or purple prickly pear. In addition, you may want to consider 'Katie' ruellia or *Ruellia brittoniana*, cassia species, crepe myrtle or evergreen pear.

With a little experimentation, a garden can become a cozy place for entertaining over the holidays and throughout the winter months. ❄️

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