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●●● FEATURE



## Seasonal Color: More Than a Great **Color Scheme**

**BY** Shelley Threefoot Cowan, NatureScapes  
 Seasonal Color Designer and Floriculturist

**W**hen you drive or walk by a beautiful bed of annuals in front of a business or neighborhood, you may assume the great color scheme was the first decision in the planning process. Guess again.

With the primary objective of planting beds that will prosper April through October, the first consideration is hardiness of the plant. Plants that look great in April with spring showers and moderate temperatures need to survive the hot and dry conditions of July, and still look great in October. Sun exposure and water supply are also important in supporting the hardiness of the plant.

The second consideration is color, as well as texture. Admittedly, color can be a personal preference; however if getting noticed is a priority, some combination of chartreuse, yellow, red and blue will be in your design. Bold blocks of color are striking in drive-by beds while mixes are more appropriate around walkways. Also important in color selection is blending plant color with permanent color around the bed, such as a building.

Plant height also plays an important role in adding visual interest in a colorful bed and is the third consideration. Careful thought has to be given to how tall a plant may grow so at its peak it does not block signage or the view of drivers. Shape goes with height. The more structure a plant has, the more formal it looks. However, many drought-resistant plants have less structure, less formality.

Lastly, and arguably most importantly, is an aspect of seasonal color you don't see—the soil. What is below ground is as important as what is above ground. If the soil isn't prepared properly, the planting may not produce the size plants, blooms or color desired.



All of these elements play important roles in the design of a healthy bed full of fabulous color, and as you might guess, can transform a tired property into an award-winning landscape.

To learn more about seasonal color or to request a free color consultation and estimate, contact NatureScapes at (770) 923-7023. **11**



**Shelley Threefoot Cowan** is the seasonal color designer and floriculturist at NatureScapes, a commercial landscape company serving metro Atlanta. She manages all seasonal color projects including design, proposals, installation and maintenance. Shelley has more than 27 years of industry experience and her seasonal color work has been recognized with multiple awards from Metro Atlanta Landscape and Turf Association and the Georgia Green Industry Association.