



# Creating Winter Interest

By Kathy Lariviere, Colorado Master Gardener

Does your winter garden lack color? Evergreens are winter workhorses, providing that verdant living color we crave so much. Trees such as ponderosa pines, bristlecone pines, and Colorado blue spruces are all Colorado natives. Dwarf conifers such as mugo pine 'Mops' and Colorado spruce 'Globosa,' have rounded, mounding shapes which add contrast and interest to the winter landscape.

Ground covers act as a living mulch, and add color and substance when placed in front of other, taller plants. Woolly and Turkish veronicas form evergreen mats, hardy ice plants sport a rosy, raspberry hue in winter, and sedum 'Angelina' provides a rich russet pop of color. And all of these ground covers will be lovely complements to spring - flowering bulbs.

Leave healthy perennials and grasses standing all winter to provide cover for birds, small mammals, and beneficial insects. The dried seed heads of brown - eyed Susans (*Rudbeckias* sp.), sunflowers, and coreopsis, and attractive fruits and berries such as rose hips and crabapples, will draw birds to the garden for a winter feast, and add form, color, and character to the winter landscape.

Grasses provide texture and movement with winter winds. Their seed heads add further interest, and their leaves provide nesting material come spring. Blonde Ambition blue gramma grass is a native grass that has it all. It holds its form well during the winter, has interesting seed heads that remain on the plant all winter, provides food and habitat for birds and beneficial insects, and is xeric to boot.

Hardscaping is another important element to consider for the winter garden. Well - placed boulders anchor the landscape. Stone walls and flagstone paths, outlined in snow, beautifully frame the garden. Fences, trellises, and arbors provide graceful backdrops and welcome contrasts. And sculptures, statues, and large pots add beauty, form and grace.

Submit gardening questions to [csumg2@elpaso.com](mailto:csumg2@elpaso.com) or call 719-520-7684. The in-person help desk is open 9 a.m. - noon and 1 - 4 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays at 17 N. Spruce St. Find on Facebook at Colorado Master Gardeners - El Paso County.