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Features

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Color Trends: Nature's Palette

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We've talked about this in the past and it has never rang more true than this year: upcoming color trends are based upon the events, economy and politics going on around us. They're influenced by and a direct reaction to what's happening globally.

So when you think about it in that manner, it's no wonder the popular trend is to play it safe with neutrals. "I don't think neutrals are going to go away," notes color expert Denise Turner, who sits on the Color Marketing Group Board of Directors and has her own consultant business called Color Turners. "The psyche of the American population is trying to be safe. Manufacturers are also playing it safe and still going with classic colors."

To that end, she says hues like navy blues, flag reds and earthy tones will be prevalent in products this spring. If you see bright colors, it will be the fall back teals and lime greens that have proven themselves popular with consumers and mainly as accent pieces.

Denise noted interestingly that box stores typically like to play it safe when they make large purchases of items like outdoor décor, so a more flexible, smaller retailer could play up bolder colors as a juxtaposition to the neutrals at larger retailers.

Sue Wadden, director of color marketing at Sherwin-Williams, says they, too, are seeing a resurgence in natural colors and materials: basketry, wicker, woven and twig patterns featured in natural colors, greens and browns.

Let's Talk Texture (and Materials)

Sue notes super shiny and super matte textures are popular right now. "Shiny textures give a veneer, mid-century feel, while matte finishes appear powdery and silky," she says. "A really hot trend in pattern and surface design centers around graphic tribal patterns and designs."

Denise concurs, saying throwbacks to the 1950s, or mid-century as it's now called, are visible at every trade show she attends in a variety of markets. "The whole nostalgia trend goes back to people want to feel comfortable," she says. "They want things that make them feel good. People will gravitate toward that."

Another popular trend is shabby chic or anything that's authentic-looking (masonry, wood, leather, metal, etc.) that's worn, weathered, distressed or burnished and rusted (if you need examples of this, turn to page 24 and check out the feature on Magnolia Market at the Silos—they're experts at this look).

Practical Application

So how do you use this in retail? Let the plants do the talking, Denise says. "I suggest to use a neutral base and sprinkle popular colors around in accessories when doing vignettes," she notes, adding she uses an olive green like Sheraton Sage from Sherwin-Williams as a backdrop for displays. "I wouldn't do gray because it would kill the beauty of the nature. I would go with a warmer gray if you use it."

In other words, keep it warm and neutral on the backdrop and let the plants pop. Don't forget great lighting, too. Poor lighting can muddle how colors look together and ruin an otherwise killer display.

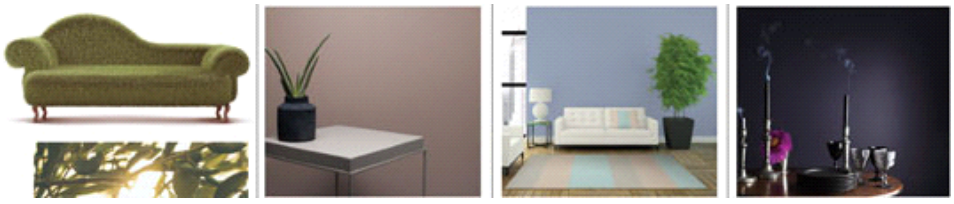
Sue agrees that retailers should focus on complimentary colors. "If you think about green vegetation, terra cotta is the perfect complimentary color—which is why terra cotta pots are so timeless," she says. "Really any natural-colored neutral is always going to be relevant for exterior home and garden colors.

"These are the colors found in nature—stone, taupe, camel, gray and beige. These colors blend nicely into the landscape, coordinate with a home's architectural features, and really lets the foliage and plants be the star, as opposed to competing colors of pots and plants."

And if you ever start to worry about your color combinations, do what Denise, who also is a master gardener, does: take a hike. "When it comes to color inspiration, I look at Mother Nature," she says. "My idea of a good time is going on a hike with my Golden Retriever and color matching natural items."

Trending Colors for 2017

We won't have Pantone's Color of the Year until after this issue goes to press, but we have several other colors of the year that give us a good idea of where we're heading, along with Pantone's Spring 2017 Fashion Color Report.



Color Marketing Group: "Green is a color of growth, of newness and of wellbeing, and Thrive will be the hue to carry us forward." Thrive symbolizes a balanced, energized future in North America for 2017, according to the group.

Sherwin-Williams: "A modern take on a timeless classic, Poised Taupe signals a new direction in society's ever-growing thirst for beautiful neutrals that bring warm and cool tones together to create one irresistibly versatile color."

GLIDDEN: Byzantine Blue, which is a purple in disguise, works well with concentrated down-to-earth colors that promote a sense of tranquility and wellness, from brown-bag tones and beachy driftwood neutrals to charcoal and gray-infused blues and greens.

Benjamin Moore: “It ebbs and flows with its surroundings, and light brings it to life. Rich, royal amethyst can fade into the soft lilac-gray of distant mountains or morph into lustrous coal. Indulge your mysterious side. Let Shadow set the mood,” says Creative Director Ellen O’Neill. **GP**