

Winter Interest in the Garden



I think the mark of a really well designed garden is that in winter it still has structure, texture and colour and this is difficult to achieve. Too much dependence on annuals and perennials can lead to a very dull picture in winter but shrubs and trees can provide the answer to the problem. The obvious thing is to use shrubs which flower in winter like the Viburnum tinus on



the right and the Mahonia japonica on the left but evergreen and variegated shrubs are also very useful. The picture on the right shows a Skimmia japonica with Euonymus fortunei Emerald Gold and the bare stems of a Spirea in the background.



The group on the left shows a Viburnum bodnantense in flower enhanced by a very dark Pittisporum tenuifolium Tom Thumb and a wonderfully green shrub behind. Sometimes in summer I feel the evergreen shrubs take up space I could use for flowers but then in the winter they really are valuable. If you choose

the right ones they can also provide flowers for pollinators and berries for the birds. My favourite plant in the garden is Photinia davidiana Palette which has flowers the pollinators adore, berries and lovely variegated foliage all year round. What more could you want?

The picture below left shows our apple tree with the remains of grasses and the new growth of the Hellebores as a contrast. Leaving grasses and bare stems until the Spring not only provides colour and texture but also gives cover for wildlife to hide during the colder months. Delaying tidying until the spring has many advantages. Deciduous trees can give wonderful effects in the winter. Our Silver Birch looks wonderful on a sunny day while the Rowan is clothed in glorious yellow lichen. This is a bonus to add to the multiple benefits of having native trees in the garden.



You may well be thinking that you cannot possibly do all these things in a small garden but it is always possible to scale it down to fit the space you have. Why not try it!

