

COPYCAT COLORS

When it comes to choosing shades and finishes for your home, Mother Nature knows best.

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even the most seasoned design pros have been there: standing in front of the paint-chip wall, debating subtle tonal shifts of grays, reds and blues...never quite sure how the palette will play out until the "before" has become an "after."

There are over 16,000 hues, shades and chips available, so how do you decide which color is the right one?

The inspiration you need is, literally, right outside your window. Like the great landscape painters Van Gogh and Monet—heck, even Bob Ross—knew, nature is rarely wrong. (In fact, it's had about 4.5 billion years to get it right.) Since our eyes

have been trained by the mix of shades in sunsets, mountainscapes and even the blooms in our backyard gardens, we tend to find those combinations pleasing; if they stray a little, our eyes can definitely tell.

Architects and industrial designers call the idea of copying nature in the built world by its fancy name, "biomimicry"—and it applies beyond buildings and canvases, of course. Think about how our "aircraft fly like birds, our submarines swim like fish and our dwellings, in many respects, mimic nests and burrows," says Carl Minchew, vice president of color innovation at Benjamin Moore. In fact, the inventor of Velcro cre-

ated his product after studying how burrs attached to his dog's fur.

So, when decorating your home, borrow from the best. It might not guarantee you success, Minchew notes, but "many would agree that there are no ugly colors or combinations in nature," so it'll be a little more difficult to fail. To give it a shot, we matched up paint to stones, blooms, grains and more. And you can do it, too. Now there are apps that work with your phone: Just take a snapshot of whatever you love—a flower, leaf or stone—and it will tell you the closest paint color match in seconds, helping you bring a bit of the outdoors in in no time.

"There are no ugly colors or combinations in nature."





Cement Gray By Benjamin Moore

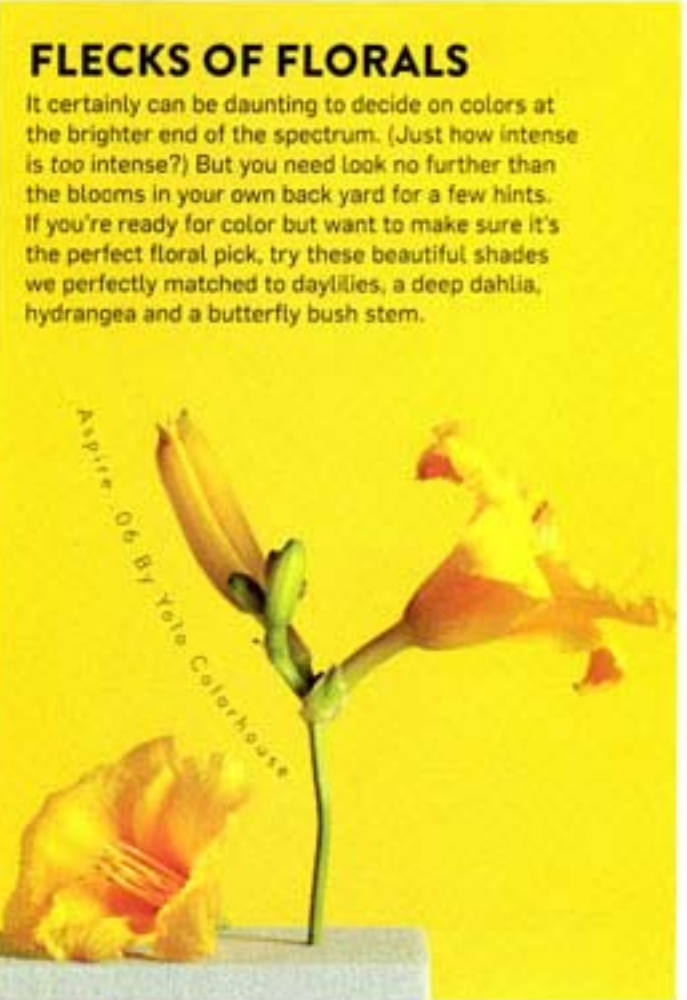


ROCK BOTTOM

For rooms where you'd prefer something a bit Oregon-coast inspired, emulate the mottled rocks that line that misty state's beaches. Some, like the top three, are a little cooler and grayer; others, like the bottom four, have a hint of mossy green. Mix and match these coastal cool grays by painting the walls one shade and ceiling another for a naturally perfect marriage.



Mossy Green By Benjamin Moore



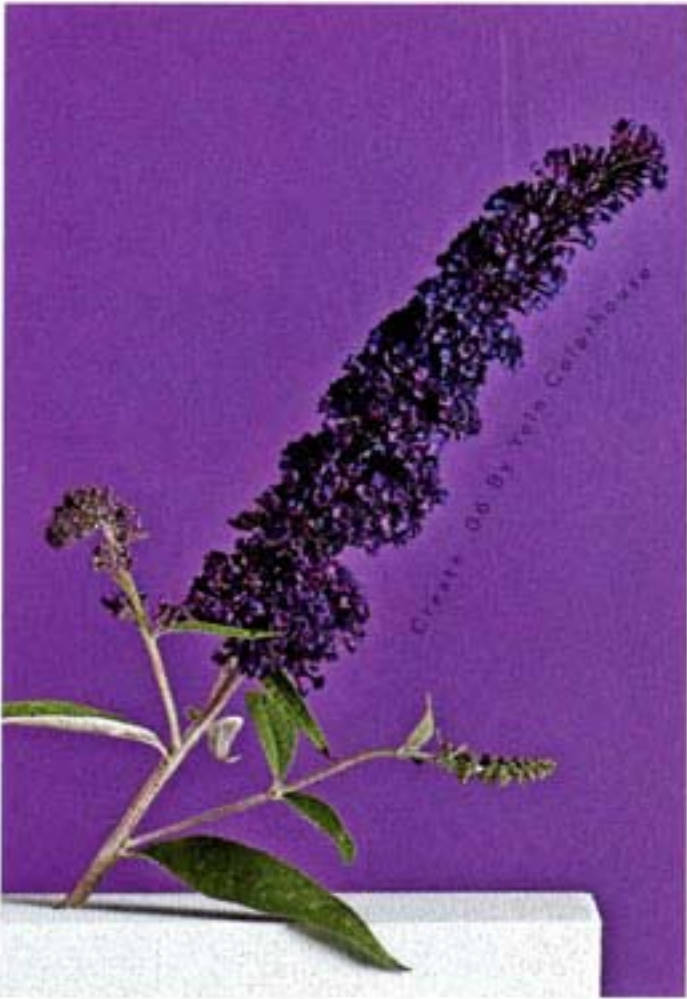
FLECKS OF FLORALS

It certainly can be daunting to decide on colors at the brighter end of the spectrum. (Just how intense is too intense?) But you need look no further than the blooms in your own back yard for a few hints. If you're ready for color but want to make sure it's the perfect floral pick, try these beautiful shades we perfectly matched to daylilies, a deep dahlia, hydrangea and a butterfly bush stem.

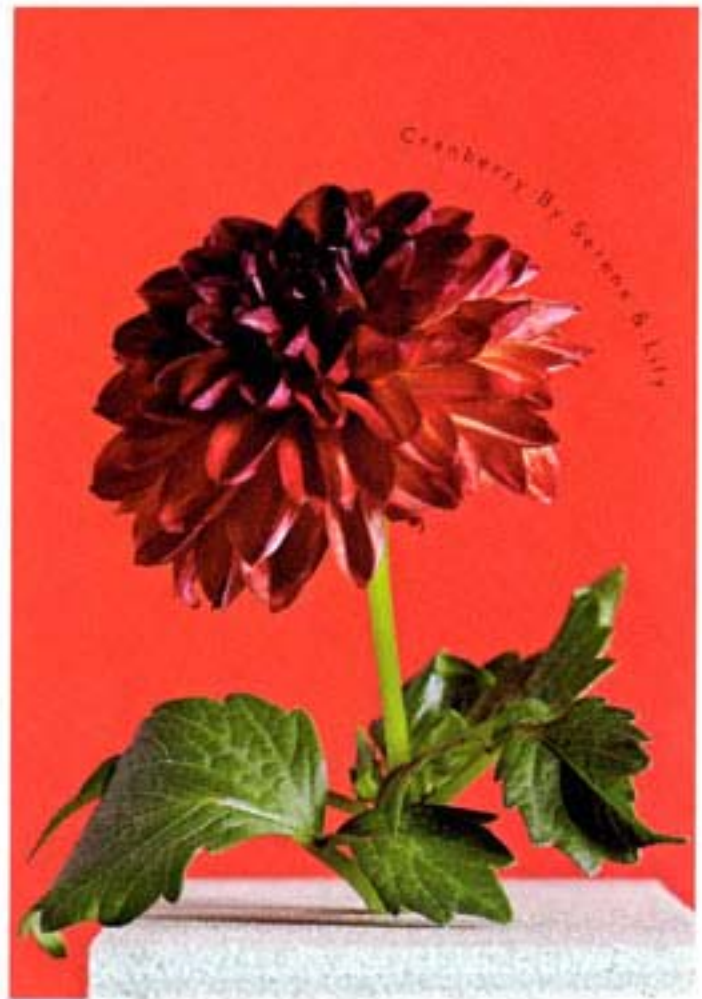
Aprilia 06 By Yolo Colorhouse



Aprilia 06 By Yolo Colorhouse



Cranberry 06 By Yolo Colorhouse



Cranberry 06 By Yolo Colorhouse



THE NO-COLOR COLORS

Neutrals seem like such a snap to choose, right? But debating the merits of off-white to a-little-beige to kinda tan-ish can be mind-numbing. Make it easier...by taking cues from natural bamboo, cool gray grains of sand and just-a-touch-of-yellow hemp rope. Your neutral palette will have naturally gorgeous appeal.



Don't waste paint. Use an online calculator to determine exactly how much you need. Just measure the height and width of your walls, minus doors and windows, to calculate the number of gallons and quarts to purchase.



GOOD TO KNOW:

LOOK FOR ZERO-VOC PAINTS.

That odor you smell from fresh paint? That's called a volatile organic compound, or a VOC. When paints have high levels of VOCs, that means large amounts of chemicals dissipate from the paint and into your indoor air at home. When shopping for paint, forget cans marked "low VOC" and choose "zero-VOC" instead. It means exactly what it says: 0% volatile organic compounds are in that can.

WHEN YOU HAVE LEFTOVERS...

1. Don't leave what's left in the can. It'll spoil—either by getting moldy, smelly, chunky or dried out—more quickly that way. Instead, use a funnel to pour the remaining paint into clean plastic water bottles, and then tighten the lids. When you're ready for a touch-up, toss in a few glass marbles, give it a shake to mix up the paint and use what you need.
2. If you've got just the dregs of a number of colors, combine them to make homemade chalkboard paint. Pour all your leftover latex paint colors together; the mixture will result in a dark, blackboard-type hue. For every cup of paint, add two tablespoons of unsanded tile grout. Stir until no lumps remain. Paint your desired surface. (The grout makes it harden faster, so work quickly.) Once your paint is fully dry, prime the surface by rubbing a piece of chalk along the entire length and width. Rub it off with a very damp towel or sponge.
3. Done with the color entirely? You can toss latex paint cans, but the liquid inside has to be dried out first. To do this, mix in an equal part of plain clay kitty litter. Let the paint absorb fully. Once it's totally dry, toss it in your regular trash. (Remember, this is only for water- or latex-based paint. If you have oil-based, you need to dispose of it at a local hazardous waste center.)



FROM THE SEA

The bottles from which these shards of beach glass are derived might not be directly born from Mother Nature, but what she did to them certainly is. Thanks to years of salt and sun, their sharp edges and finishes are muted and roughed-up, resulting in a pretty ethereal palette.

GORGEOUS GLASS

With color names like Tulip, Beet, Celery and Habanero (which we paired with complementing lemon, strawberries, grapes and nectarine, below), these handmade glass tiles from Aromas, California-based Fireclay Tile are created with the earth in mind—and their base materials are 100-percent post-consumer recycled glass from old windows and solar panels, too. All 40 of Fireclay's glass tile options are available in gloss and matte finishes and in 13 shapes. Plus, you can order up to five free samples and request gratis design assistance from the company's "Dream Team," so you're sure to find the right fit for your next backsplash or bathroom mosaic. From \$50 per square foot, fireclaytile.com

