

# THE RAINBOW BORDER....

IT'S COLOR THEORY

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The IDEA Garden is a joint project of  
Smith County Master Gardeners,  
Smith County Extension Service and  
City of Tyler Parks & Recreation,  
with funding by the East Texas Council of Government.

# THE RAINBOW BORDER

The Rainbow Border concept was developed and designed by Smith County Master Gardener, Charline Wallis Perlewitz, It is based on the fact that all spectrum color begins from white light emanating from the sun. After a rain, as the light passes through drops of moisture, it breaks into various wavelengths, from longest to shortest: red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet (purple). The order of colors in this garden is patterned after that relationship.

The first section of the border is white, representing white light from the sun. Then the colors of the spectrum appear in the border in the same order as in every rainbow, whether made by raindrops or a prism: after white are red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet sections. The last section of the garden assumes that the spectrum colors are gathered up and added together to make white light again. So both the first and last sections of the garden are white, Alpha and Omega.

In designing the border, plants were used that bloom in various seasons of the year, and some which will be evergreen or otherwise create interest during the winter. Each section of the border contains various shades of its color, as well as contrasts in texture and shapes to maintain interest. Plants were included that create a transition from one color to another, so that there is some soft blending of the colors just as they appear in a rainbow.

For instance, at the end of the red border are

red and orange Gaillardias, and at the beginning of the orange section are Daylilies which move gradually from reddish to red-orange and then to orange, in the fall, the red and apricot Chrysanthemums will create the bridge. For the transition from orange to yellow, Red-Hot Pokers (summer) and graduated colors of Irises (spring) are used. You can note the rest of the transitions in the diagrams of each section.

The border's purposes include that of a colorful invitation to Rose Garden visitors to come to the Master Gardener's IDEA Garden, and then it becomes an introduction to the space. With the inclusion of samples of both familiar and new plants, it can also serve as an idea resource for those who wish to use it as a gardening palette. Visitors may select from this floral palette the colors, sizes, shapes and textures of plants to purchase from local or mail-order nurseries in order to create his or her own personal garden masterpiece.

