



## Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article May 9, 2016

### Seeing Your Garden in Black and White

by Lydia Holley

Do you photograph your garden? You should.

You can use photography to journal your garden's blooms. This allows you to compare the timing of blooms throughout the years. You can also use photographs to determine whether colors coordinate well in your garden design. Or, you can use photography to look at your garden in a different way - with no color, using black and white photography.



In order to compare the shapes of your plantings and foliage combinations, use black and white photography. When you see your garden without color distracting you, you will be able to clearly see the forms and shapes of your garden's plantings.

Photographer Ansel Adams knew that black and white images showed the geometry and form of the landscape well. His images would look completely different in color. The bones of the landscape are easily visible, and shadows are more pronounced. These are things you may learn to see in your garden after a number of years, but are immediately noticeable when you see them in black and white photography.

Not only do forms show up well in black and white, but also the tints and shading of foliage are much more defined than when your eye sees the garden in color. Darker shades recede, while lighter shades advance. For instance, plantings with purple foliage will seem to fade into the background, while plantings with yellow or silvery foliage will seem to move forward. Using colorful foliage will be easier to design with when you see their effects in black and white. The scale of your plantings will stand out, as well as the mass of your planting drifts. Hardscape materials such as walls and pathways, and man-made objects, such as statuary, will also be highlighted. You will be able to see if these are in balance with your garden, or overwhelming to the space.

Do not just use black and white photography for large areas of the garden, either. Contrasting textures are a design tool you should be using in your garden in order to make your garden seem more dynamic. A black and white photograph will instantly let you know if you have too little foliage contrast in your garden, something that you may not see with colorful blooms distracting your eye. If you are unsure if two different types of foliage are complimentary, it should be easily visible when you photograph the two different foliage textures together in black and white.

If you have a digital camera, there are numerous programs that can take your images and transform them into a black and white image. Thankfully, we no longer have to purchase black and white film. I encourage you to try this design tool. It can open your eyes to seeing your garden in an entirely new way.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email [hendersonCMGA@gmail.com](mailto:hendersonCMGA@gmail.com) or visit [www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org](http://www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org).