

Wondering about the hot paint colors for next year? Wonder no more: The 2012 paint palette will draw heavily upon the natural colors in the American landscape, according to Debbie Zimmer, color expert at the Paint Quality Institute.

“Native plants and flowers, oceans and lakes, and rocks and minerals are the sources of inspiration for the paint colors that will be ‘in’ next year,” says Zimmer. “If you’re thinking about repainting your home interior, look to the great American outdoors.”

Here are some highlights:

Blue, the Jewel of the Sea

Blues gained popularity in 2011 and continue to be red hot in 2012. “From sparkling sea-glass blue to colonial blue-grey, blues are suitable for all living spaces, being a naturally soothing color that is loved—in one iteration or another—by almost everyone,” says Zimmer.

Green, From Farm to Forest

Greens, ranging from celery and asparagus to fir and fern, allow homeowners to bring the comforting feelings of the world outside into the world within. According to Zimmer, dining rooms and kitchens are the “natural” spots for in vogue greens, but the hue is also at home in family rooms and bedrooms.

Violet, Majestic Purple Mountains

“A harmonious blend of patriotic blue and red hues, violet can add ‘punch’ to any room when used as an accent color, or serve as the dominant color in a bedroom,” says Zimmer.

But natural hues aren’t the only news for 2012. Zimmer predicts that three paint and decorating trends will gain prominence next year:

Patterns

In 2012, patterned paint will take center stage, with increased interest in hound’s-tooth finishes, lacy designs, and bold color blocking techniques. “In some cases, pattern will be the main decorating feature in a room; in others, it will provide a subtle, textured backdrop for fine furnishings and artwork,” says Zimmer.

Black and White

The classic combination of black and white isn’t just for Cape Cods any more. You’ll see much more of it in all sorts of settings, from contemporary apartments to historic homes, says Zimmer. “The pairing is a great way to freshen an interior with something smart and stylish,” she says.

Exterior Paint Combinations

On the home exterior, colors for shutters will begin to shift away from the traditional look of high-contrast green, red, or black to a more monochromatic palette. “You’ll see more shutters that are painted just a shade darker than the siding,” says Zimmer. “Owners of homes with stone exteriors can get in on things by matching the shutter color to the dominant color of the stone.”

Despite all the new colors and trends, Zimmer says some things in the paint world will remain the same in 2012: “Top quality 100 percent acrylic latex paint will continue to provide the best performance and the best value to budget-conscious homeowners,” she says.

And since paints are locally produced, consumers can easily support the growing “Made in America” decorating trend.

