

The Five Brush Types You Need

Marion Dearlove

This article summarises advice from artist Qu Leilei on picking the 5 brushes you need to do almost everything in Flower and Bird Painting and Landscape.

Leilei explained that to have a chance of getting a good result, you need to be using the right brushes.

Brush Properties

First, when choosing your brush each brush needs to have the following 4 qualities. It's a bit difficult to determine some of them because the brushes are glued but if you have a trustworthy supplier there should be no issues.

Jian – sharpness – the brush should always form a good point. It should be made from good quality hair and, after use, even a soft brush should form a good point.



Yuen – Plumpness – the body

Of the brush when viewed face on should form an even circle. There should be no distortion

Qi – Evenness – The brush should include fine straight hairs that form the tip. If you squash a dry brush between your fingers the top should form an even straight line. These hairs will form the tip when wet.

Jian – resilience – The brush should be springy. When pressed onto the paper there should be some level of resistance. If they just bend, they are not good quality and will not give you the results you are looking for.

The Brushes You Need

The 5 brushes you need to get good results are:

Dow, Ti or Zha brush. These brushes are plump sheep or goat hair brushes. They can have stiffer hairs in the centre to give them increased resilience. It needs to be large enough to give you a good lotus leaf segment i.e. so you get paint a good sized lotus leaf. You will use it for landscape and for large leaves and for washes. You need 1.

Long tip wolf hair brush. These brushes are used for line work. You need a long tip and a narrow shaft. You need 1.

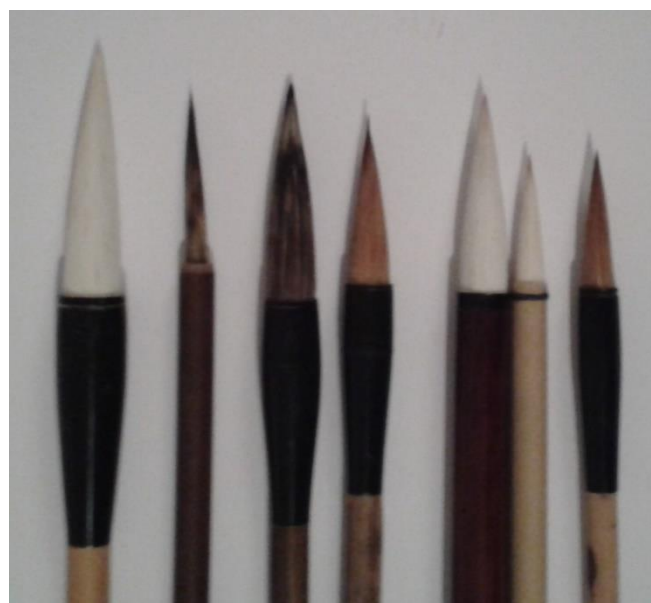
Stiff hair brush. Badger or squirrel hair brush with a plump body and a good tip. They come in a range of sizes. Pick one in a size that works best for you. You will use it for lines, textures and ink washes in landscape and flower painting. You need 1.

OR – you don't need both

Orchid bamboo brush. Wolf hair brush also with a plump body and a good tip. They also come in a range of sizes. Pick one in a size that works best for you. You will use it for lines, textures and ink washes in landscape and flower painting. You need 1.

White cloud brush. They come in a range of sizes. Pick one in a size that works best for you. You will use it for petals, smaller leaves and smaller washes and for washing out using clean water. You need 2. You will keep one for clean water only - do not use it to paint, because once you have paint in it, it will be no use for applying clean water. If you don't know why you would be washing out with clean water – ask your teacher!

Small calligraphy brush – this is a small brush with a fine point and a narrow shaft. They are not long hairs. They come in a number of styles – wolf hair – crab claw – red feather – 7 purple 3 white (rabbit and goat) – 9 purple and 1 white (rabbit and goat). Any of these compositions are suitable. Choose what suits you best. They hold a lot of ink These brushes are used for fine line work in flower and bird and landscape. You need 1.



Sheep Long Stiff Orchid White Small
Tip Hair Bamboo Cloud Callig

Now you know what you need and what to look for when choosing your brush – you are good to go! You are also in a position to sort through your collection of brushes and check out what you have and what you can use it for.

Of course, there are many other brushes that you might “want” and you might even “want” more than one of each of those listed here – but remember – to get a good result – you don't actually need them. You probably just need a bit more practice!