

CSS Fixed Width, Centered Web site starting with a Dreamweaver Template

– tutorial modified from S. Sullivan and G. Rewis – Chapter 2, Mastering CSS with Dreamweaver CS3 by R. Berdan

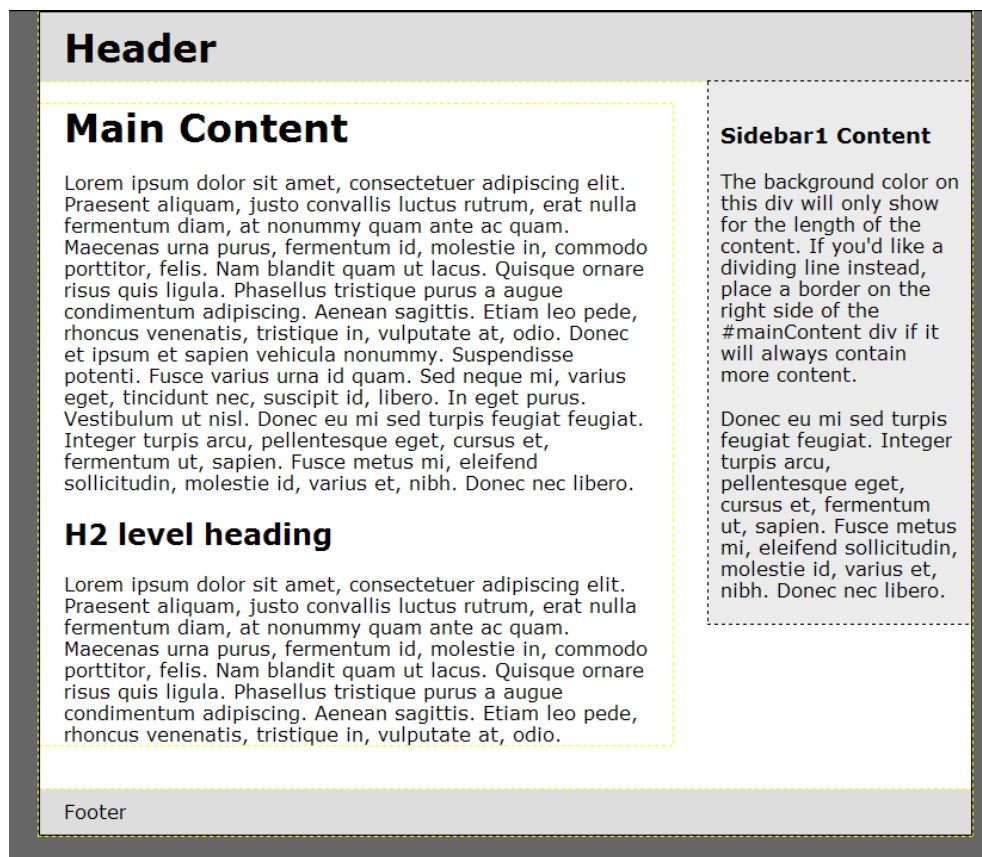
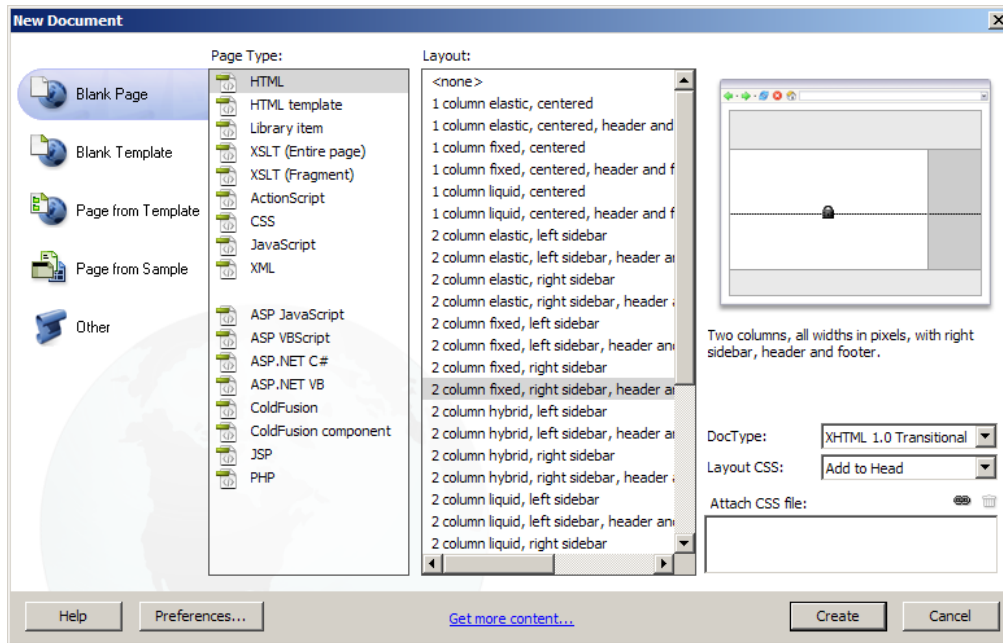
In this tutorial we will build a basic web site using two techniques – first I will show you how to build the site using Tables by slicing the design in photoshop and then formatting it in Dreamweaver - the total time will be under 30 minutes to create your template. Then we will create the same design using CSS – this tutorial requires images that will be provided.

There is some disagreement over whether or not web developers should abandon tables and create web sites using only CSS. I still believe tables are useful, faster and easier and used together with CSS can produce beautiful looking web sites that are easy to maintain. However, it appears that the web and software like Dreamweaver is pushing towards the use of CSS – and it clearly has some advantages, however from this tutorial you will see that they are neither easier or faster to implement and CSS requires considerably more knowledge. That being said – best way to make yourself more employable is master CSS as well as tables.



The Design on the top left was created using tables after slicing the design in photoshop and saving for web. The design on the right looks similar but was built entirely using CSS. Both designs require images created in an image editing program. This tutorial only explains how to use CSS to build the template – the images will be provided.

1. Create a new folder call it horticulture, and place the images folder supplied to you inside.
2. Start up Dreamweaver CS3\CS4 and select the CSS template 2 column fixed, right sidebar, header and footer template.



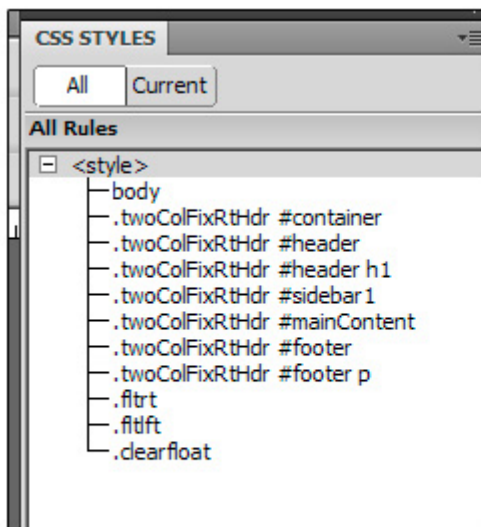
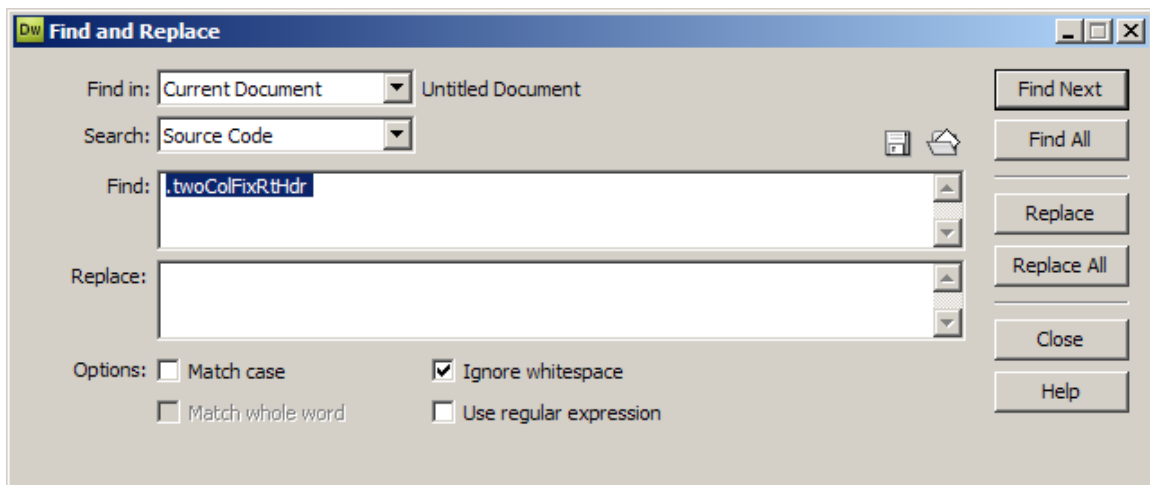
Dreamweavers templates are all shades of gray when you start. Each “box” represents a specific div with an id element to identify it.

3. Look at the CSS panel to view the styles associated with the Dreamweaver template. Notice that each id element is preceded by a class element e.g. `.twoColFixRtHdr`

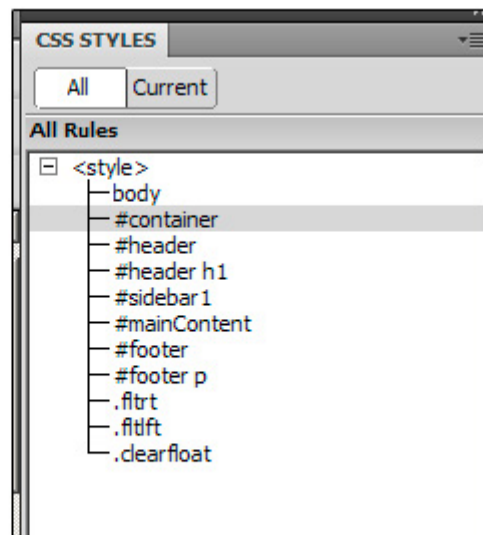
#container. The preceding class elements are only needed if you plan to build a web site and use several different Dreamweaver templates. To make the template easier to work with we will first remove the preceding class elements so the code is easier to work with.

4. Go into code mode and find the first body tag it will look like this:

<body class="twoColFixRtHdr"> - delete **class="twoColFixRtHdr** - then go up to the head of the document inside the style and select the text **twoColFixRtHdr** in the style (click and drag your mouse over the text to select it) – then Edit>Find and Replace – click on the Replace All box, this will replace this text with nothing throughout the page.



Before

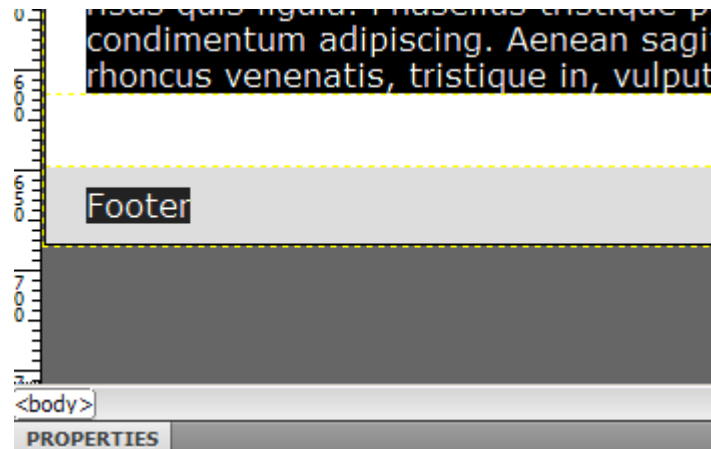


After

After removing the preceding **class** you will see the CSS box is much simpler and easier to work with. When you are finished you should copy all the style commands into an external style sheet and link it to your web pages. You may also want to remove some of the comments in the code.

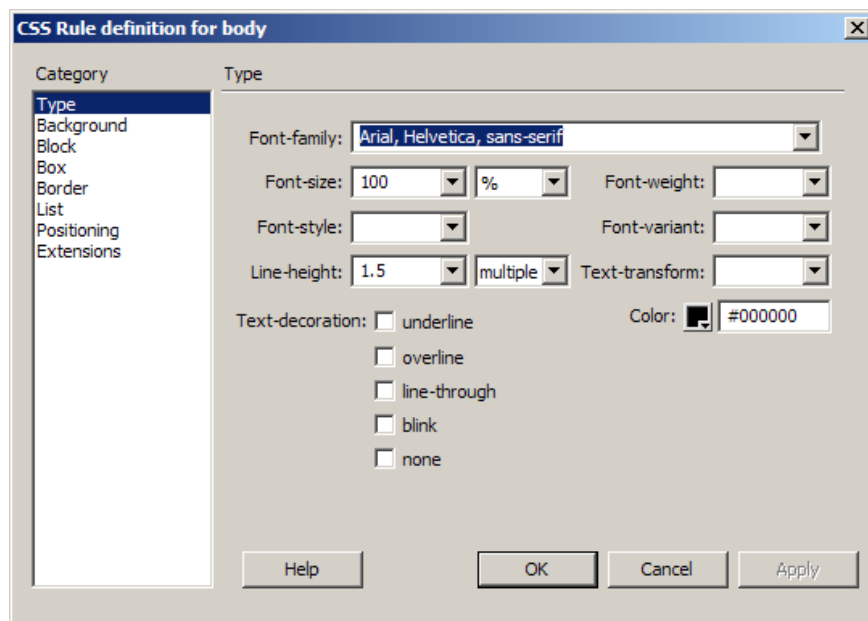
This Dreamweaver template is made up of a several boxes – an outer #container which is 780 pixels wide and contains the other boxes, #header, #sidebar, #mainContent and #footer. Each of these is an id element and is unique. The template also comes with float right and float left (.fltrt and fltft) classes to align images left or right on the page. It also includes a .clearfloat class which can be used to ensure the content does not wrap around the other divs.

5. Click on the body tag selector at the bottom of the document in Dreamweaver – this selects all the content on the page:



body tag is visible at the bottom of the page in Dreamweaver, also select it in the CSS panel to be sure you have the <body> tag not the container selected.

6. Click the edit (pencil icon) in the CSS panel to open the CSS Rules box and Select Background – change the color from the default #666666 to #7F98C3 click Apply to view the change. You should see that only the background has taken on a light blue color. If you see light blue inside the container you did not have the body tag selected when you made the change. With the CSS rule box still open (if you closed it click back on the pencil icon), Select Type in the left box and set the values as shown below then click OK



Your CSS in the head of your document for the body tag should look like this:

```
body {  
    margin: 0;  
    padding: 0;  
    text-align: center;  
    color: #000000;  
    background-color: #7f98c3;  
    font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;  
    font-size: 100%;  
    line-height: 1.5;  
}
```

7. If you have not saved your page yet – this is as good a time as any – File>save as template_yourname.html (You can name it whatever you want template.html is also fine).

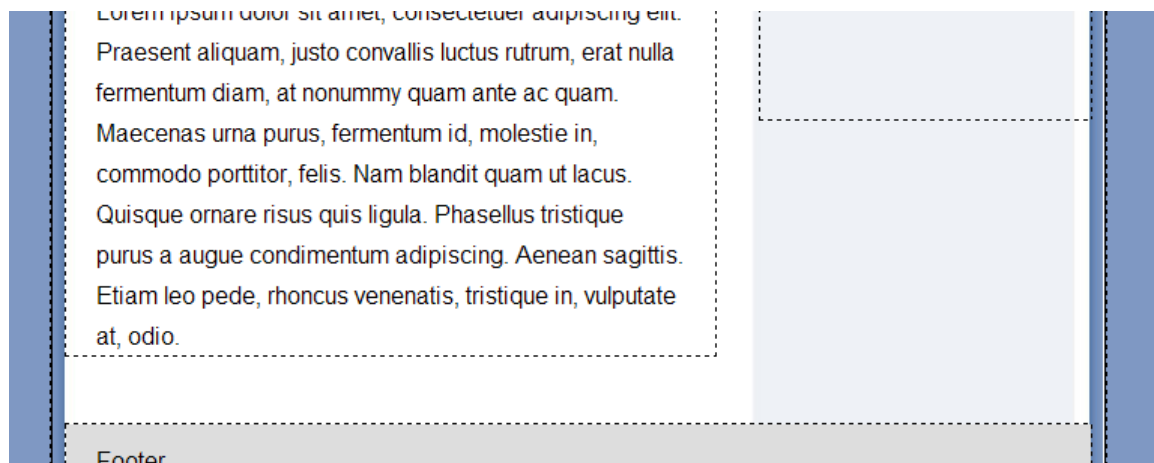
USING BACKGROUND IMAGES

In order to make our web page exhibit a 3D appearance we are going to add a drop shadow around the edge of the content area and we will add a False gray box that extends down the right side of the design by using a background image that tiles.

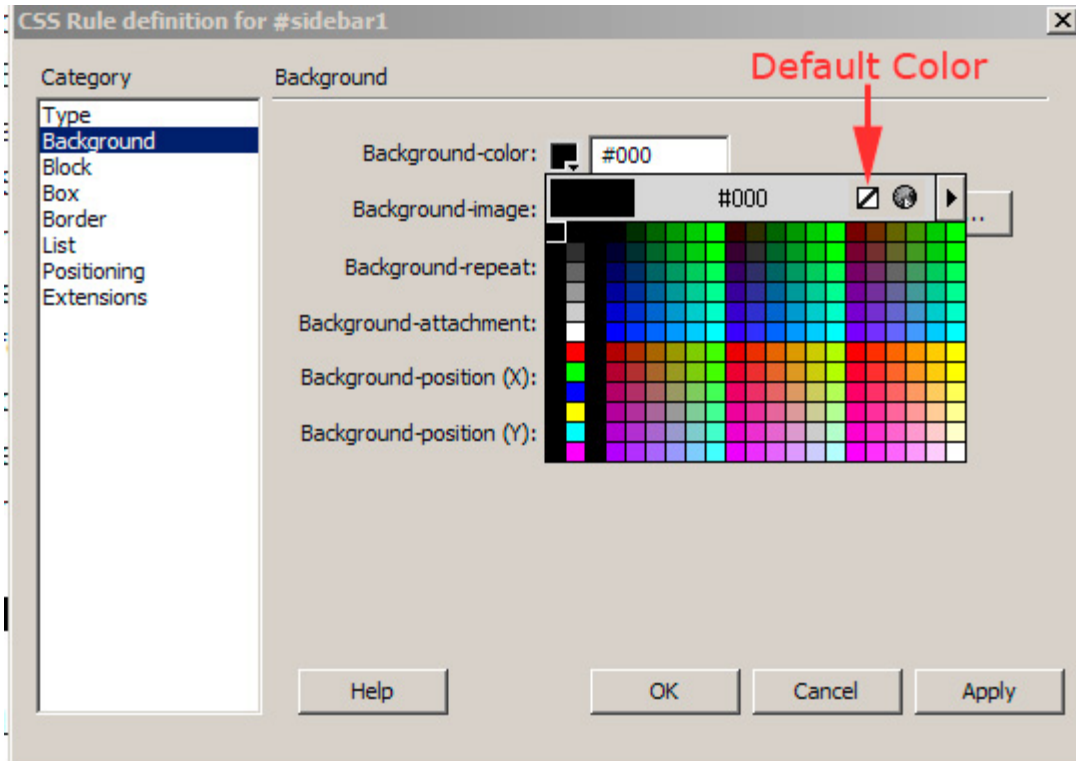
The trick to make the 3D edge and Faux right column is to add a graphic as a background inside the container div. The image we will use is called “body_back.jpg” in the folder images it looks like the strip below. The image is 700 pixels wide by 10 pixels in height.



8. First place your cursor inside the page and select <div#container>. Click on the pencil icon to edit the #container element – from the category box select Background, then select **Background-image**, click browse and find the image body_back.jpg in the images folder, Click Apply to see the background image, Set **Background – repeat** to repeat y – image tiles vertically in the Y axis only. Then select the **Category Box**, uncheck the Padding Same for all and set the Right to 9px and **Left** to 9px, the **width** to 682 px. (700 px – 9px – 9px = 682px). and then click OK to close the box. The background should appear.



- To make the Sidebar 1 Content box transparent – so you can see the lighter blue color in the background stripe – select the <div#sidebar> tag at the bottom then click on the CSS pencil icon to edit the CSS. In the Category box select Background, click on the Background-color option – click on the square and click on the smaller square on the right with the line through it on an angle – this sets the default color – transparent.



CREATING THE HEADER

- Place your page in split view and place your cursor on the <div#footer> tag at the bottom – press the right arrow key on your keyboard – the cursor should now be after the </div> tag in the footer section.

```
<div id="footer">
<p>Footer</p>
<!-- end #footer --></div>(Cursor is here)
```

This places your cursor between the end of the #footer and the end of the #container.

- In the Common category of the Insert bar, click on the image icon (sixth from the left – tree picture) and navigate to images lg_flower.jpg and select it and click OK (leave the text boxes in the Accessibility text box empty). The flower image appears at the bottom of your page on the left side.

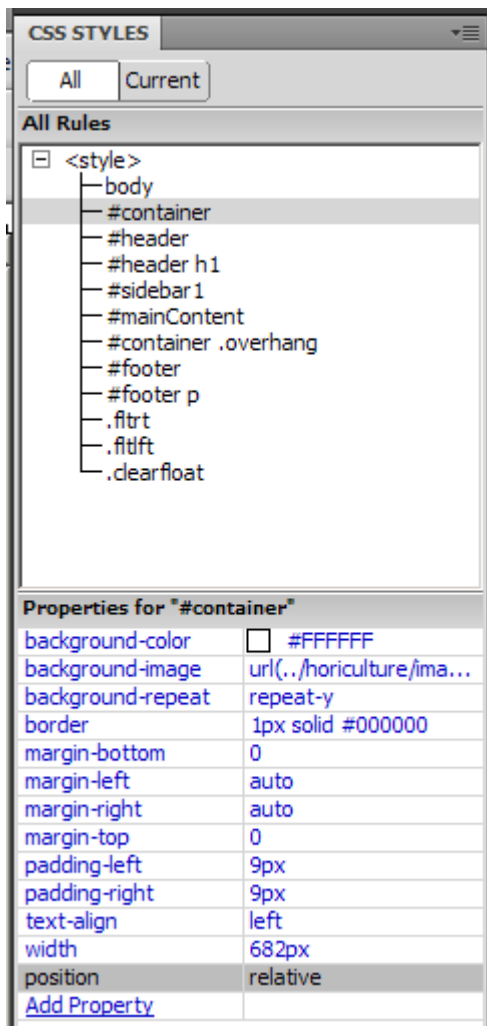
11. Select the flower image. On the bottom of the CSS styles panel, click on the New CSS Rule icon. Leave the Select Type on Compound in CS4 (advanced in CS3), change the selector name to #container .overhang and click OK.

12. In the Category List, select Positioning and choose the following values:

Position: absolute
Placement Top: 0px
Left: -65px

Click OK – the image will still be in place. To move the image – click on the image, in the properties box select class drop down and from the menu select **.overhang**. Your image will move to the top left of the page and it is negatively margined of the left side of the page – this is because the image is taking its position off the body element not the container.

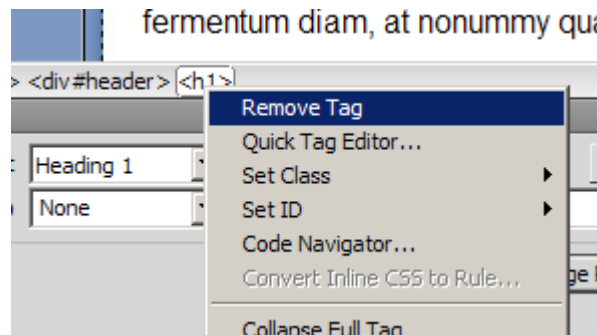
13. To fix the image position – we need to make the **#container** position relative. Select the **#container** in the CSS properties pane, click **Add property**, type **position** or choose it from the drop down menu then choose **relative** from the drop down menu that appears in the right column. The image should appear in the correct position!



The flower is in position but it overlays some of the page content – which we will fix shortly.

ADDING THE BANNER ART

13. Place your cursor in the header and at the bottom right click on the <h1> tag and from the pop up menu choose Remove tag. Dreamweaver will remove the tag and leave the word header highlighted – press delete to remove the word. (Of course you could have simply gone into the code and removed the <h1>Header</h1> tags).

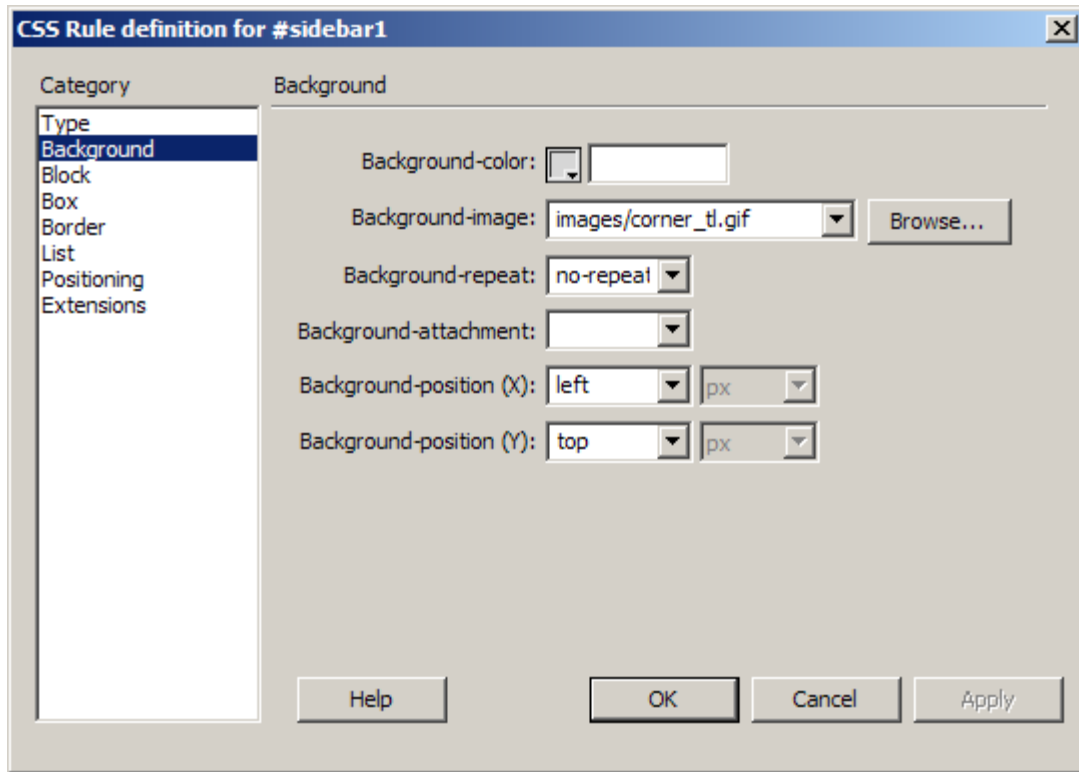


14. With your cursor inside the <div id="header"> Cursor here </div> click on the Insert bar and select the image icon and select the logo.jpg picture to place it into the head section. The image is sliding beneath the flower due to absolute positioning.
15. Select the <div#header> in the tag selector bar and the #header in the CSS panel. In the Properties pane of the CSS panel, change the value of the background property from #DDDDDD to #FFF (white). Also change the padding values to 40px 0px 20px 150 px (Top Right Bottom Left) – this will move the logo to the right.

Save your page at this time.

ROUNDING THE SIDE COLUMN

1. First we will added a rounded corner to the top of the side column. Select the #sidebar1 style in the CSS pane and click on the pencil icon at the bottom of the CSS pane to edit. In the Category box select Background >Background image> Browse and select the corner_t1.gif file. Set the Repeate property to no-repeat, Background –position X: left and Background position Y: top. (see below).



2. Select Live View you will see that the coner doesn't meet up perfectly.

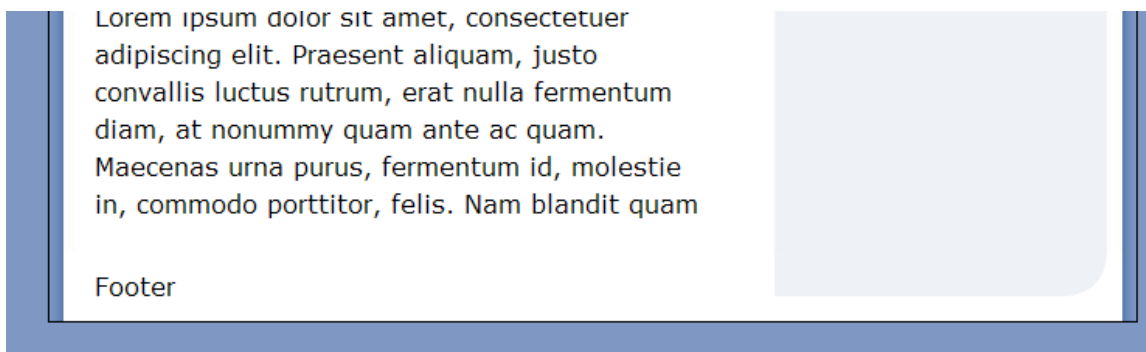
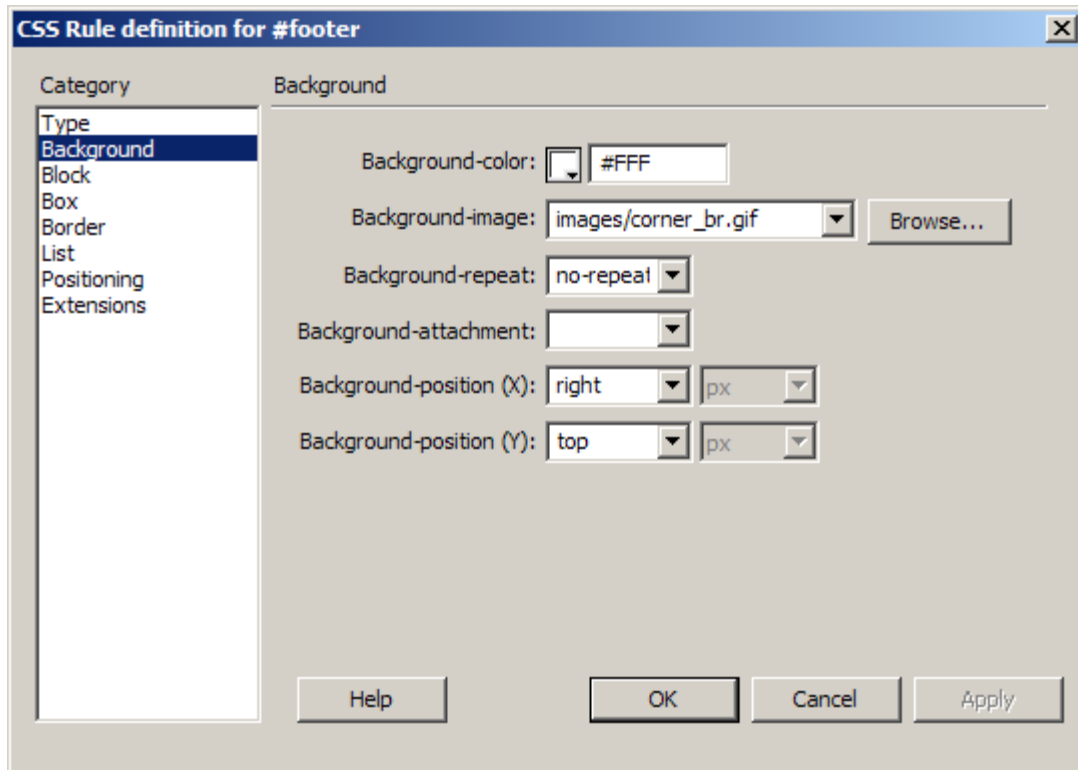


3. To fix the misalignment we need to modify the width of the side bar and the padding values. Select the #sidebar1 in the CSS panel and below in the Properties change the values to:

Width: 184 px;
 Padding: 20px 20px;

Then preview and the corner should be snug. $184 + 20 + 20 = 224$ px the width of the sidebar.

4. Now we will add a Faux bottom corner. By placing it in the footer the curve will always be at the bottom. Place your cursor into the footer div and in the Rules pane select #footer. Click the edit icon to change the properties. Select Background in the Category, change the background color to white #FFFFFF and add the Background image corner_br.gif. Set it to no-repeat. Click Apply. Select Background position x- right; Background position y – top. Click Apply and your corner should be in the correct position. Click OK.



STYLING THE HEADINGS

Since all the headings will be the same color and font we can create a compound selector to modify h1, h2, h3 and h4 at the same time.

1. Click on the + new CSS rule button at the bottom of the CSS panel and select Compound in the Selector name text filed type: h1, h2, h3, h4 then select OK. In the Category box select Type and set the color to #628958, font-family: Georgia, Times Roman, the select Block Text-align: right. You may have to add a carriage return in the main content area to move the text down below flower picture.

ADDING A DROP CAP to the beginning of a paragraph

1. Create a new CSS Rule > Selector Type: Class in the Selector name field type `.dropcap` and press OK.
2. Category: Type select: Georgia, Times Roman ..., color: #7F98C3.
3. font size: 5em, Line-height: 0.85 em
4. Category: Block select display: block
5. Category: Box: float Left, Padding Top 0.03 em, Right 0.1 em
6. Select OK

Click and drag on the first letter of the paragraph, then select class in the property box and select dropcap – the first letter should be light blue and large like the one below.



From here you can add, links, buttons, boxes and additional images. When you are finished you should export the CSS to external file. Select all the CSS styles by shift-clicking the CSS window pane, click on the top right of the pane and from the flyout menu select>Move CSS Rules>Move rules to a new stylesheet provide a name e.g. mystyle.css and select OK.