

Annuals: Gardens Come Alive With Colour

Annuals are those plants whose life cycle is completed within a single season. The seed germinates, the plants bloom, set seed and then die from spring to the following autumn. Owing to their short life span, annuals allow you to experiment and express yourself anew each year.

Colour

Annuals should be planted so that they complement the plants around them, for example, mauve or orchid-coloured Petunias in front of a yellow-flowering potentilla shrub, low-growing white Alyssum interplanted with blue Forget-me-nots, or blue Ageratum and yellow Calendula surrounding red Salvia.

Light Requirements

The bulk of annuals prefer sunny locations but the following list will help you choose plants for all areas of your garden.

| Sun | Semi-Shade | Shade |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Ageratum | Ageratum | Begonias |
| Alyssum | Alyssum | Browallia |
| Asters | Begonias | Coleus |
| Carnation | Browallia | Fuchsia |
| Celosia | Coleus | Impatiens |
| Coleus | Dusty Miller | Lobelia |
| Dahlia | Geraniums | |
| Dusty Miller | Impatiens | |
| Geraniums | Lobelia | |
| Marigolds | Marigolds | |
| Morning Glory | Morning Glory | |
| Petunias | Nicotiana | |
| Portulaca | Pansy | |
| Salvia | Petunias | |
| Snapdragons | Salvia | |
| Sunshine Impatiens | Snapdragons | |
| Verbena | Vinca | |
| Zinnia | | |



Grouping

Annuals, often referred to as bedding plants, show themselves best when planted in groups rather than individually. Even when planting on a small scale, use a minimum of three plants and try to plant so that each group overlaps with the one beside it, creating a unified flow rather than isolated spots of colour.

Height

In designing your garden, keep in mind that annuals offer a tremendous range of heights accommodating virtually any area in your yard. Here is a small but representative sampling of the possibilities:

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| Ageratum ëBlue Blazerí | 15 cm | Evening Scented Stock | 38 cm |
| Browallia | 30 cm | Fibrous-rooted Begonia | 25 cm |
| Butterfly Snapdragons | 75 cm | Geraniums | 36 cm |
| Celosia plumosa | 45 cm | Dwart Impatiens | 18 cm |
| Dahlia-flowering Zinnias | 90 cm | Lobelia | 13 cm |
| Dusty Miller | 20 cm | Petunia | 25 cm |
| Dwarf Marigolds | 20 cm | Sweet Alyssum | 10 cm |

How to Plant Annuals

1. Prepare the flower bed to a depth of 30 cm, using good soil, composted manure and peat moss, all well mixed.
2. Gently loosen the roots of each plant as you remove them from the cell-pak.
3. Water thoroughly and fertilize each plant with 5-15-5 plant starter.
4. Keep the bed well watered for the first two weeks until the plants are rooted. Then water once a week with a soluble fertilizer, 20-20-20 or 15-30-15.
5. In choosing and placing your annuals, consider their need for sun or shade.
6. Should the floral display diminish, pinch the plants by nipping or cutting the stems back. In a week or so your plants will look better than ever. Do this before going on vacation and your garden will delight you when you return.

Pinching



One of your most important pruning tools costs nothing! It consists of your thumb and index fingers.



Annuals and perennials or, for that matter, anything you can break off with your fingers will become more dense and bushier with new growth after pinching.



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