



PLANT ANNUALS FOR COLOR

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Annual plants complete their life cycle in a single season; seeds germinate and the plant grows, blooms, sets seeds and dies in one year or less. Even the smallest garden has room for annuals. This can be no more than a few pots or hanging baskets of petunias or marigolds. Today's trend toward low maintenance landscapes (with paving and gravel ground covers) does not preclude the use of annuals. In fact, these areas often need more color for interest.

Annuals can provide a succession of bloom throughout the year. In southern Nevada annuals are planted several times during the year. Plant September-November for winter and spring color. Plant March-June for summer color.

SOIL PREPARATION: Annuals grow best in a well-drained soil rich in plant nutrients. If the soil is very poor and rocky or consists mostly of caliche, remove it to a depth of 6 to 12 inches and replace with soil containing organic material.

Organic matter should be added to an existing flowerbed every year. For a new flowerbed, spread a 2- to 4-inch layer of organic matter over the garden area. For a 100 square-foot area, spread 1 to 2 pounds of commercial or organic fertilizer and 5 to 7 pounds of soil sulfur over the compost or organic matter. Spade these amendments into the top foot of soil. Level and moisten the area before planting. If in doubt of pH of soil, a soil test by a nursery or lab is recommended. If annuals are planted year after year in the same bed as is done in commercial plantings, soil should be sterilized or replaced once every year or so. Soil pathogens can build up and kill newly planted annuals.

PLANTING FROM SEEDS: Before planting seeds, check the package directions for recommended planting depth. Make sure the beds have been prepared properly. Seeds most often fail to germinate or survive as seedlings due to lack of consistent and frequent irrigation. On the back of the seed packet you will find specific directions. You can sow in rows or broadcast the seed at the depth recommended on the package. After planting from seed, sprinkle a light layer of mulch over the area and firm the soil with the back of a rake. Soak the seeded bed with a fine misting sprayer. If you have to water by hand, adjust the nozzle to a fine spray and go back and forth over the bed until the soil is well soaked. Do not use a strong jet of water or it will displace the seed and create puddles of water. Always keep the soil moist until the seeds germinate. This usually takes seven to ten days after which watering can be less frequent.

STARTING SEEDS INDOORS: If you want to get a head start, start the seeds indoors. This method also protects the seedlings from possible attack by other living organisms until they become established. This method is more successful than direct seeding for most annuals. It will take a month or two for the seedlings to mature enough to be set outside

If you sow seeds too early, the seedlings will be leggy and rootbound when planting time arrives. Use commercial potting mix for best results. Soil from the garden is a poor choice because it could contain weed seeds, insects and fungus. It will drain poorly and become waterlogged. Then fill the flat or container with the soilless mix until it is ½ inch from the top. Before planting the seed, check the package directions for recommended planting depth. Scatter the seeds on the surface and cover with the media to the recommended depth and firm with a flat board. Then cover the soil with a dampened piece of newspaper or paper towel and place it in a warm spot, but not in direct sun. Moisten when needed. After three or four days, begin checking daily for signs of sprouting. When the first sprouts appear, remove the paper and place the container in more light (filtered sun), but not direct sunlight. Then when the seeds have developed two sets of true leaves, transplant them into 2-inch pots, Styrofoam cups with drain holes or peat pots filled with moist soilless media or sand. To do this, loosen the soil around each plant, gently grasp one of the leaves and carefully pull out the seedling. Use a pencil to poke a hole in the new planting mix, drop the seedling in and firm the soil around it. Keep the plants in the shade a day or two; then move them into filtered light until they are ready to be set out permanently.

PLANTING FROM CONTAINERS: Bedding plants purchased in plastic flats, six packs or small containers usually have pot-bound root systems. As with all plants, buy only those that are disease, insect and weed free. If planted intact, the root system will be slow to establish in the surrounding soil and the plants will suffer moisture stress. A preferred method is to loosen and untangle the root system without breaking the soil ball. Plants will usually recover rapidly and become established quickly. Spacing of plants in a bed should be based on the directions included on the nursery identification tag. Bedding plants must be watered immediately after planting and then daily until they have become established. After establishment, they should be watered on an “as-needed” basis. Wilting will reduce flowering on many bedding plants and should not be allowed to happen. Frequency of watering depends on the soil type, exposure to sunlight and wind, variety of the bedding plants and season of the year.

MAINTENANCE OF PLANTS: Weeds should be controlled either by mulching and/or hand weeding. Herbicides can be used, but only as a last resort. Compost and many wood and bark mulches are composed of fine particles and should not be applied any deeper than 2 to 3 inches. Never place compost or organic mulch next to the stems of plants because this can encourage stem rot.

If a good time-release fertilizer has been used at planting, little, if any additional fertilizer, will be needed. The compost incorporated at planting will also add nutrients. Both liquid and granular fertilizer can be added, as needed, during the growing season. Remember—a lower nitrogen fertilizer will help encourage minimal growth and good flowering.

After flowers have completed their blooming cycle, cut or pinch off faded blossoms to promote more flowering. The object of pinching off these faded blooms is to prevent the development of unsightly seed heads that drain energy from the plant that would otherwise be used in flowering.

Insects and disease can also be problems to annuals. Plants should be checked on a regular basis. At the first sign of a problem, the less toxic method of control should be used. Never spray any chemical control until the problem is correctly identified and no other method is available.

Winter annuals are cold hardy, but the blooms are not. During severe cold temperature, they should be covered with blankets or commercial row covers. Never use plastic next to plant material.

ANNUAL FLOWERS FOR WINTER AND SPRING COLOR

PLANT	HEIGHT	PLANTING DATES	SUN	SHADE	BLOOMING PERIOD	REMARKS
African Daisy <i>Dimorphotheca spp.</i>	12-18 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	sun	no	March to Sept	Hardy, fast-growing. Blooms over long period.
Alyssum <i>Lobularia maritima</i>	6-12 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	sun	no	March to Sept	Excellent for borders. Blooms profusely. Hardy.
Bells of Ireland <i>Moluccella laevis</i>	18-24 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	no	Partial shade	March to Sept	Green, bell-shaped flowers and stems. Good for flower arrangements.
Black-eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	3-4 ft.	Sept to Nov	sun	no	April to frost	Will bloom first summer from seed. Flowers are good for cutting.
Calendula <i>Calendula officinalis</i>	15-18 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	sun	no	March to June	Early spring-flowering plant. Yellow and orange blossoms.
Candytuft <i>Iberis umbellata</i>	10-16 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	no	Partial shade	Feb to May	White, fragrant flowers. Good cut flowers.
Coreopsis <i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i>	18-30 in.	Sept to Nov	sun	no	May to Nov	When well established, will persist year after year. Good cut flower.
Dianthus, Sweet William <i>Dianthus barbatus</i>	10-15 in.	Sept to Nov	sun	no	March to Oct	Dense cluster of flowers. Attractive border flowers.
English Daisy <i>Bellis perennis</i>	6 in.	Oct to Nov	no	shade	Oct to Nov	Flowers best in cool weather. Low bedding plant.
Fox Glove-Digitalis <i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	24-30 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 15	no	Light shade	May to Sept	Tubular flowers shaped like fingers.
Gaillardia <i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	15-24 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 15	sun	no	Most of year	Very hardy, long-lasting flower. Good summer plant.
Gazania <i>Gazania spp.</i>	6-12 in.	Sept 15 to Dec 1	sun	no	Most of year	Bright yellow, orange and red with dark rings in the middle of flowers.
Hollyhock <i>Althrea rosea</i>	10-15 ft.	Oct	sun	no	March to May	Plant seeds in fall for early spring bloom.
Larkspur <i>Delphinium ambigua</i>	24-36 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 30	sun	no	March to May	Good background plant for beds and screening.
Lobelia <i>Lobelia erinus</i>	4-8 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 15	sun	Partial shade	March to June	Good for borders and edging. Can be grown as summer annuals if grown in shade.
Nicotiana <i>Nicotiana alata</i>	24-30 in.	Sept to Nov	sun	Partial shade	March to June	Slender, tubular flowers.
Ornamental Cabbage <i>Brassica oleracea capitata</i>	10-12 in.	Sept to Nov	sun	no	Sept to June	Grown for highly ornamental, highly colored rosettes.
Ornamental Kale <i>Brassica oleracea acephala</i>	10-12 in.	Sept to Nov	sun	no	Sept to June	Clusters of tightly curled leaves.
Pansy <i>Viola wittrockiana</i>	4-6 in.	Sept to Nov	sun	Partial shade	Sept to June	Makes a colorful display in containers or boxes.

ANNUAL FLOWERS FOR WINTER AND SPRING COLOR *continued*

PLANT	HEIGHT	PLANTING DATES	SUN	SHADE	BLOOMING PERIOD	REMARKS
Petunia <i>Petunia hybrida Multiflora varieties</i>	12-24 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 15	sun	no	March 1 to May 3	Best to start as transplants. Keep old blooms picked off.
Phlox <i>Phlox drummondii</i>	6-12 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 15	no	Partial shade	March 1 to May 30	Good for borders, edging or containers. Good cut flower.
Pincushion Flower <i>Scabiosa stellata</i>	2 ft.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	sun	Partial shade	June to frost	Good in mass plantings. Excellent for arrangements.
Poppy (California) <i>Eschscholzia californica</i>	12-24 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 15	sun	no	March to June	Pinch off dead flowers frequently for continuous bloom.
Poppy (Iceland) <i>Papaver nudicaule</i>	1-2 ft.	Sept 15 to Nov 15	sun	no	March to June	Excellent flowers. Sear cut ends in flame before placing in water.
Poppy (Oriental) <i>Papaver orientale</i>	3-4 ft.	Sept 15 to Nov 15	sun	no	March to June	Strong, bold plants.
Poor Man's Orchid <i>Schizanthus pinnatus (X wisetonensis)</i>	1 1/2 ft.	Sept to Nov	Filtered sun	no	March to June	Good pot subject. Small, orchid like flowers.
Shasta Daisy <i>Chrysanthemum maximum</i>	1-2 ft.	Sept to Nov 1	sun	no	April to frost	Cut old flowers to prolong bloom.
Snapdragon <i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	6-10 in. dwarf 8 in.-2 ft. standard	Sept 15 to Dec 1	sun	no	March 1 to frost	Dwarf type provides earlier bloom. Avoid overhead watering.
Statice <i>Limonium sinuatum</i>	18-24 in.	March 15 to June	Morning sun	no	May to frost	Easy to grow. Good for cutting and drying.
Stock <i>Matthiola incana</i>	15-30 in.	March 15 to June 1	sun	no	April to Sept	Fragrant. Flowers single or double.
Strawflower <i>Helichrysum bracteatum</i>	2-3 ft.	March 15 to June 1	sun	no	March to frost	Lasts indefinitely when dried.
Sweet Pea <i>Lathyrus odoratus</i>	9 ft. (vine) 2 ft. (bush)	Sept 15 to Nov 1	sun	no	March to June	Fragrant and colorful. Easy to grow from seed.
Viola <i>Viola tricolor</i>	6-8 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	no	shade	Jan 15 to April 1	Plant for winter or spring color.
Wall Flower <i>Cheiranthus cheiri</i>	1-2 ft.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	sun	no	March to June	Noted for sweet fragrance.

ANNUAL FLOWERS FOR SPRING AND SUMMER COLOR

PLANT	HEIGHT	PLANTING DATES	SUN	SHADE	BLOOMING PERIOD	REMARKS
Ageratum <i>Houstonianum</i>	4-6 in.	March 15 to June 1	sun	no	June to frost	Small, fluffy, light blue flowers. Good border plant.
Amaranthus <i>Amaranthus tricolor</i>	1-4 ft.	March 15 to June 1	sun	Partial shade	June to frost	Must be planted in the back of flower bed because of its height.
Asters <i>Asters spp.</i>	12-24 in.	March 15 to June 1	sun	no	May to frost	Wide range of flower colors. Good plant for area.
Begonia (Wax) <i>Begonia semperfloren-cultorum</i>	10-12 in.	March to May	no	Only shade	June to frost	Does well in pots, beds and borders. Keep soil moist.
Black-eyed Susan <i>Rudebeckia hirta</i>	3-4 ft.	March 15 to June 1	sun	no	April to frost	Long lasting cut flowers. Has hairy stems and leaves.
Candytuft <i>Iberis umbellata</i>	12-18 in.	March to May	no	Partial shade	June to frost	White, fragrant flowers. Good cut flowers.
Castor Bean <i>Ricinus communis</i>	60 in.	March to July	sun	no	April to Sept Foliage only	Fast growing. Good for screen. Poisonous.
Celosia (Cockscomb) <i>Amaranthaceae c. plumosa</i>	12-30 in.	March to June	sun	no	July to frost	Crested or plumed flowers. Excellent summer color.
Clarkia <i>Clarkia grandiflora</i>	15-24 in.	March to May	no	Partial shade	June to frost	Best grown in well-drained soil. Seedlings difficult to transplant.
Coleus <i>Coleus blumei</i>	1-1 ¼ ft.	March to May	no	shade	April until frost	Pinch stems to encourage branching and keep flower buds pinched off.
Columbine <i>Columbine aquilegia</i>	2-3 ft.	April to June	no	shade	April to June	Plants self-sow. Attracts hummingbirds.
Coreopsis <i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i>	18-30 in.	March to May	sun	no	June to frost	Remove old flowers to prolong blooms. Easy to grow.
Cosmos <i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>	2-3 ft.	March to June	sun	no	June to Nov	Tall plant with sparse foliage. Easy to grow.
Dahlias (Seed) <i>Dahlia spp.</i>	12-36 in.	March 15 to April 1	no	Partial shade	July to frost	Excellent for cut flowers.
Dianthus, Sweet William <i>Dianthus barbatus</i>	10-15 in.	March to June	sun	no	April to frost	Very popular. Highly prized cut flowers.
English Daisy <i>Bellis perennis</i>	6-10 in.	March to June	no	Partial shade	April to June	Flowers best during cooler months.
Gaillardia <i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	15-24 in.	March 15 to June	sun	no	June to frost	A very hardy, long-flowering plant. Re-seeds easily.
Gazania <i>Gazania spp.</i>	6-12 in.	March 15 to June	sun	no	Fall, summer, spring	Very attractive flowers. Makes a good ground cover.
Geranium <i>Pelargonium spp.</i>	1 ft.	March 15 to June 1	Morning sun	no	June to frost	Variety of upright and traveling stems. Easy to grow.

ANNUAL FLOWERS FOR SPRING AND SUMMER COLOR *continued*

PLANT	HEIGHT	PLANTING DATES	SUN	SHADE	BLOOMING PERIOD	REMARKS
Globe Amaranth (<i>Gomphrena</i>) <i>Globe amaranth globosa</i>	15-24 in.	March 15 to July 1	sun	no	June to frost	Purple, clover-like flowers. Excellent for dried arrangements.
Impatiens <i>Impatiens balsamina</i>	6-8 in.	April to June	no	shade	June to frost	Needs to be moist at all times. A tender plant.
Larkspur <i>Consolida ambigua</i>	24-36 in.	March 15 to June 1	sun	no	April to frost	Best blooms are during cooler months.
Lisianthus <i>Eustoma grandiflorum</i>	1-2 ft.	March 15 to May	no	shade	April to frost	Tulip-shaped flowers. Keep old blooms cut off.
Lobelia <i>Lobelia erinus</i>	6-10 in.	March 15 to May 1	no	Partial shade	April to frost	Good in rock gardens. Needs moist soil.
Marigold <i>Tagetes spp.</i>	12-15 in.	March 15 to July 1	sun	no	June until frost	Keep short flowers picked off for continuous bloom.
Morning Glory (bush or vine) <i>Convolvulus spp.</i>	2-3 ft.	March 15 to July 1	sun	no	May to Sept	Prune severely to renew plant. It can get leggy.
Nasturtium <i>Nasturtium tropaeoumlum</i>	10-15 in.	March 15 to June 1	no	shade	April to July	Grows and blooms quickly.
Nierembergia <i>Hippomanica violacea</i>	12-15 in.	March 15 to June 1	sun	Partial shade	April to frost	Attractive bell-like flowers.
Periwinkle (Vinca) <i>Catharanthus roseus</i>	12-15 in.	March 15 to July 1	sun	no	June to frost	Masses of blooms all season. Good summer plant.
Petunia (multiflora varieties) <i>Petunia hybrids</i>	12-24 in.	March 15 to June 1	sun	Partial shade	March to July	Best to start as transplants. Blooms best in cooler weather.
Phlox <i>Phlox drummondii</i>	6-12 in.	March 15 to June 1	no	Partial shade	April to frost	Good cut flower. Can be used as a bulb cover.
Poor Man's Orchid <i>Schizanthus pinnatus</i> (<i>X wisetonensis</i>)	15-20 in.	March 15 to April 15	no	Partial or full shade	April to June	Blooms during cooler months. Does not like heat.
Portulaca a Rose Moss <i>Portulaca grandiflora</i>	4-6 in.	April to June	sun	no	April to frost	Excellent low growing plant. Succulent type.
Primrose <i>Primulaceae</i>	10-12 in.	March 15 to May 1	no	shade	April to July	Blooms better during the cooler months.
Salvia <i>Salvia spp.</i>	12-15 in.	March 15 to June 1	no	Partial shade	June to Sept	Tall, brilliant, red spikes. Very attractive.
Snapdragon (tall or dwarf) <i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	6-10 in. dwarf 8 in.-2 ft.	March 15 to July 1	sun	no	March to Oct	Dwarf type provides earlier blooms. Avoid overhead watering.

ANNUAL FLOWERS FOR SPRING AND SUMMER COLOR *continued*

PLANT	HEIGHT	PLANTING DATES	SUN	SHADE	BLOOMING PERIOD	REMARKS
Statice <i>Limonium sinuatum</i>	18-24 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	sun	Partial shade	March to June	An everlasting flower. Large sprays of flowers.
Stock <i>Matthiola incana</i>	18-30 in.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	sun	no	March to June	Fragrant flowers. Single or double.
Strawflower <i>Helichrysum bracteatum</i>	2-3 ft.	Sept 15 to Nov 1	sun	no	March to frost	Lasts indefinitely when dried.
Sunflower <i>Helianthus annuus</i>	3-4 ft.	March 15 to May 1	sun	no	July to frost	Needs plenty of sun. Edible seeds.
Tithonia (Mexican Sunflower) <i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i>	4-6 ft.	March 15 to June 1	sun	no	July to frost	Very hardy. Tall and dwarf varieties.
Wall Flower <i>Cheiranthus cheiri</i>	1-2 ft.	March 15 to June 1	sun	Partial shade	March to June	Plant by seeds or transplants.
Zinnia <i>Zinnia spp.</i>	6-18 in.	April to June	sun	no	May to frost	Tall and dwarf types. Grows easily from seeds or transplants.

For more information:

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