

Annual Flowers

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Annual flowers are generally thought of as plants that complete their life cycle during one growing season and then die. This definition is correct for some plants but is not completely true for many others. Plants listed in this publication fall into several different categories and should be thought of as plants that can be grown as annuals in Kentucky.

The United States is divided into hardiness zones. Kentucky is in Zone 6. Hardiness zones are determined by the mean low temperature during the year. A plant that is hardy or perennial in Zone 7 or 8, south of Kentucky, would be considered an annual in Kentucky. Hardiness zones or climate variations greatly affect a plant's performance. People who have lived in other parts of the country are often disappointed by a favorite flower's performance in Kentucky or surprised by how well other flowers perform.

This publication shows how plants grown as annuals at the University of Kentucky—Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Arboretum have performed. It is not necessarily a list of recommended annuals.

Explanation of Terms

The publication lists several categories.

Scientific and Common Names—The scientific name is the genus and specie of the plant. Gardeners seeking more information about a specific plant will find this scientific name helpful. Common names may vary from region to region and can be quite confusing. Often the same common name is given to a different plant in another area.

Exposure—Refers to light conditions best suited to the listed plant.

- *Sun*—Full sun exposure.
- *Semi-Shade*—Plants are shaded part of the day. Generally afternoon shade helps retain the best flower color.
- *Shade*—A wide variation from light shade to deep shade. Generally plants grown under extremely shaded conditions will not be as vigorous or will not produce an abundance of blooms.

Color—Assorted colors indicate a wide variety, although all colors may not be available.

Height—This measure is a general approximation. Exposure, soil conditions, soil fertility, and general garden maintenance can affect it. Also, in some cases individual cultivars vary from the general height description.

Season—Annual flowers are no different from vegetables. Cool-season flowers perform best when night temperatures are cool. These should be considered best suited for spring and fall flower gardens. Many will tolerate some frost. Warm-season annuals should not be planted until after all danger of frost has passed. When night temperatures drop in the fall, these plants often produce smaller and fewer blooms and will not tolerate frost.

Diseases and Pests—Insect or disease problems that occur frequently are listed. Even though some plants are not bothered frequently by a disease or pest problem, you should still examine them frequently just in case.

Uses—Those listed are just possible uses and by no means the only way these plants can be used effectively. In this case, bedding refers to a mass planting.

Performance—This category provides some general tips on the plant's performance and general maintenance that may encourage plant vigor. Some terms used are:

- *Heat Check*—Some plants will stop producing flowers during periods of extremely high temperatures. When the temperature conditions change, the plants will begin to produce new blooms.
- *Rebloom*—Some plants do not bloom continuously and may require pruning or other maintenance to promote additional bloom production.
- *Self-sow*—Annuals can be divided into three categories. Tender plants will not tolerate frost, and low winter temperatures generally kill the seed. Half-hardy plants will not tolerate a hard frost, but some seed may remain viable throughout the winter. Hardy plants will not tolerate hard frost, but seed will remain viable unless the winter is extremely severe. Cleome is a hardy annual and will self-sow; that is, each year you can expect these plants to appear. This reappearance can be desirable if you like the plant, but if you wish to control or eliminate a plant from your garden, hardy or half-hardy annuals can be a problem.
- *Low-maintenance*—This general term indicates plants do not require special attention other than watering during dry periods and occasional additional fertilizer.

- **Rank**—A plant described as rank is generally not uniform in height or form. Plants may not be attractive but the flowers may be desirable.
- **Deadheading**—Removing dead or declining blooms promotes production of new flower buds.
- **Cultivar**—In some cases a particular cultivar is desirable. Cultivar refers to a particular name, like Zinnia ‘Red Ruffles’. The cultivar is ‘Red Ruffles’ and it may perform entirely differently from Zinnia ‘Peter Pan Cream’.

Sowing Information—Sowing outside refers to direct seeding in the garden. Sowing inside refers to starting plants indoors and planting them outside as transplants. Although direct seeding may be possible, the quickest bloom display and greatest plant vigor are obtained by planting transplants.

Days to Germination—These numbers are approximate and should be used as a guideline. For example, if you sow seeds that generally take 7 days to germinate and 14 days have passed without germination, you have a good indication that a problem exists. Either the seed is not viable, or a disease or some other cultural problem has affected germination. Comments concerning germination are simply some of our observations.

When sowing seed, be sure to read directions on the seed package. In some cases, covering or not covering the seed can be extremely important. Always use some type of sterile growing medium to start seeds indoors. This medium helps reduce but not eliminate the possibilities of disease problems such as damping-off.

Annuals for Sun and Shade

Name	Flower Color	Height	Exposure	Pests	Uses	Propagation
<i>Abelmoschus moscheutos</i> Abelmoschus	pink, red	10-12"	sun	few	bedding	seed
The individual blooms last only one day, but numerous buds are produced. May self-sow but is not invasive.						
<i>Ageratum houstonianum</i> Ageratum, Floss Flower	blue, pink, white	8-10"	sun, semi-shade	few	bedding, cut	seed
During periods of extreme heat, the plant may check and cease to produce new buds. When the temperatures change, the plant will resume blooming. Plant may require deadheading to maintain habit. ‘Blue Horizon’ is 18-24" tall and can be used as a cut flower.						
<i>Alcea rosea</i> Hollyhock	various	3-7'	sun	rust, powdery mildew	border, cut	seed
Newer cultivars are less susceptible to rust. Plants are mostly biennial but newer cultivars flower the first season. May reseed. Single- and double-bloom forms are available.						
<i>Alternanthera ficoidea</i> Joseph's Coat	foliage, various colors	6-10"	sun	few	border, edging	cuttings
This and related species produce a wide variety of foliage color. Often used as an edging plant. Will tolerate shearing for a formal effect.						
<i>Argyranthemum frutescens</i> Marguerite Daisy	white, yellow, pink	10-12"	sun	few	bedding, cut	cuttings
Plants are not heat-tolerant and do not provide an extended show. Cobbitty Daisies are hybrids that offer single- and double-bloom forms. Their performance is similar.						
<i>Asclepias curassavica</i> Blood Flower	red/yellow	3'	sun	aphids	bedding	seed
Considered a hardy annual and will reseed. Produces a nice display of flowers from early summer until frost. Typical milkweed seed pods must be removed if this plant needs to be contained. Attractive to butterflies.						
<i>Antirrhinum majus</i> (cool season) Snapdragon	various colors	6-36"	sun	aphids, mites	bedding, cut	seed
The height depends on the particular cultivar. There are two flower forms available. May die back during the summer due to heat stress.						
<i>Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum</i> Fibrous Begonia	white, pink, red	6-14"	sun to shade	few	bedding	seed
Available with bronze or green foliage. An excellent low-maintenance plant. It will withstand heat and drought and perform very well in full sun locations. Seed is small and somewhat difficult to germinate. Due to this and the long production time necessary in commercial greenhouses, home gardeners are advised not to try to start their own seedlings.						
<i>Brassica oleracea</i> (cool season) (Acephala Group and Capitata Group) Ornamental Kale and Cabbage	gray and green foliage, variegated with pink and yellow	12-18"	sun	cabbage looper, aphids	bedding	seed
Performs best in the fall. Will often last until after Thanksgiving. Plant is edible and the foliage can be used in salads. Looper control will be necessary to maintain appearance.						

Annuals for Sun and Shade (continued)

Name	Flower Color	Height	Exposure	Pests	Uses	Propagation
<i>Browallia speciosa major</i> Browallia	blue, white	10-14"	sun, semi-shade	mites	bedding, container	seed
Often does not perform well in Kentucky.						
<i>Calendula officinalis</i> (cool season)	yellow, orange	8-14"	sun	few	bedding, cut	seed
Pot Marigold	Plant becomes very unsightly during the heat of the summer and is often best removed. Flowers have been used to flavor soups and stews. Produces a profuse number of blooms; cutting back may help to improve vigor.					
<i>Calibrachoa x hybrida</i> Trailing Petunia	various	3-6"	sun	few	bedding, container	cuttings
These small, petunia-like flowers are quite attractive and produce a continuous show. Most, if not all, of the hybrid cultivars available are patented plants. Propagation for resale is prohibited.						
<i>Callistephus chinensis</i> China Aster	various	8-24"	sun, semi-shade	aster yellows	bedding, cut	seed
For continuous show, succession planting is necessary. Due to disease problems, plant should not be located in the same area each season.						
<i>Capsicum annuum</i> Ornamental Pepper	flowers inconspicuous; red, cream, purple, orange fruit; all turn red in late summer	8-24"	sun	few	bedding	seed
Peppers are edible but extremely hot. Not as many cultivars available as previously seen in the trade. Very low-maintenance, producing excellent display late in the season. AAS 2002 Winner Ornamental Pepper 'Chilly Chili' has a mild flavor.						
<i>Catharanthus roseus</i> Vinca, Periwinkle	rose, pink, white	12-14"	sun	few	bedding	seed
An excellent low-maintenance annual. Has continuous display until late summer or early fall, when the bloom size and number begin to decrease.						
<i>Celosia argentea</i> var. <i>cristata</i> Cockscomb	various	8-48"	sun	few	bedding, cut, dried	seed
Celosia are divided into three distinct groups: Plumosa, Cristata, and Spicata. The plumed forms are attractive bedding plants and can also be used as cut flowers. The Cristata group, or crested form, can be useful as a bedding plant. The Spicata Group, or wheat celosia, is generally taller than the others and produces long, slender, spiky blooms. 'Flamingo Feather' is an example of this group. All types will dry and hold their color if picked before they reach their prime. Tend to be unsightly if allowed to set seed.						
<i>Centaurea cyanus</i> Bachelor Button, Cornflower	various	12-24"	sun	few	cut	seed, direct seed in garden
Seed can be sown directly in the garden after danger of frost. Blue is the most common color, but several other colors are available. Plants tend to look ragged. Harvest clumps of stems and the unopened buds will open in the vase. Best kept in the cut-flower garden.						
<i>Cleome hasslerana</i> Cleome Spider Flower	pink, white	36-58"	sun	few	border, cut	seed
The plant will reseed and may become invasive. Stems have spines. A nice, old-fashioned plant for the back of the border. Requires no maintenance other than trying to reduce the number of seedlings the next year. 'Sparkler Blush', AAS Winner for 2002, is more compact, maintaining an even habit around 3' tall. Related species <i>C. rosea</i> var. <i>bicolor</i> is a much smaller form and has no spines on the stems. 'Linde Armstrong' is an excellent choice for the garden.						
<i>Coleus x hybridus</i> Coleus	foliage various colors	9-18"	shade, semi-shade, sun	few	bedding	seed, cuttings
Choices include a variety of foliage forms and color combinations. Remove blooms to maintain vigor of the plant. Other than removal of the blooms of some cultivars, the plants are low-maintenance. New sun-tolerant cultivars are available in numerous color combinations. Many of these are patented.						
<i>Consolida sp.</i> Larkspur	pink, lavender, purple	3-4'	sun	fungal diseases	border, cut	seed
Plants do best in cooler climates but will establish in our area. Will not tolerate heavy, wet soils. Once plants are established, they will readily reseed in the area. Direct seeding in the garden may be preferable.						
<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i> Cosmos	pink, magenta, white	12-48"	sun	few	border, bedding, cut	seed
Taller cultivars may require staking. Shorter cultivars such as 'Sonata' may not be as vigorous as the taller types. Can be used as a cut flower.						

Annuals for Sun and Shade (continued)

Name	Flower Color	Height	Exposure	Pests	Uses	Propagation
<i>Cosmos sulphureus</i> Cosmos	red, orange, yellow	12-24"	sun	few	bedding	seed
'Diablo', an older cultivar, is still one of the best performers in our area. Some of the more compact types do not hold up all season. Seed heads should be removed for best display.						
<i>Cuphea hyssopifolia</i> Mexican Heather	purple, white	8-14"	sun	few	edging, bedding	seed, cuttings
A very low-maintenance plant. Plants are compact and uniform and provide an excellent display until frost.						
<i>Dahlia</i> (hybrids) Bedding Dahlia	various	14-24"	sun	mites	bedding	seed
Plants come readily from seed; therefore, there is no need to dig and store the small tubers that are produced. Some plants have a short day response and may not produce consistent bloom. Plants are available with green or bronze foliage.						
<i>Datura metel</i> Horn of Plenty	white, yellow, purple	3'	sun	few	bedding, container	seed
All parts of plant are poisonous. The large, showy, trumpet-shaped flowers are quite attractive and fragrant. Plants bloom from midsummer until frost. Very hardy annual and can be invasive.						
<i>Dianthus chinensis</i> (cool season) China Pinks	various	6-12"	sun, semi-shade	mites	bedding, edging	seed
Plants may be perennial in this area. Winter conditions will determine hardiness. Plants tend to "burn out" during the summer and become unsightly. Cutting back helps to promote vigor.						
<i>Emilia coccinea</i> Tassel Flower	orange, red	2-3'	sun	few	bedding, cut	seed
Not that well-known, but a nice addition to the cut flower garden. Plant habit is very open. Blooms are a colorful substitute for Baby's Breath in arrangements. Readily self-sows.						
<i>Eschscholzia californica</i> (cool season) California Poppy	yellow, pink	8-12"	sun	few	bedding	seed
Plants quickly decline in hot weather. Very short-term display.						
<i>Eustoma grandiflora</i> Lisianthus	purple, white, pink, bicolor	6-8", 2-3'	sun	few	bedding, cut	seed
Available in two habits: short for bedding purposes and tall for bedding or cut. These seem to perform exceedingly well or exceedingly poorly. Soils must be well-drained. Flowers can be easily rain-damaged. Seed is small, somewhat difficult to germinate, and extremely slow-growing, so gardeners should purchase these plants already started. Cut flowers have a long vase life.						
<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i> Gaillardia, Blanket Flower	orange, yellow	14-18"	sun	few	bedding, cut	seed
May reseed. Blooms for an extended period. Declining blooms should be removed to maintain vigor.						
<i>Gazania rigens</i> Gazania	various	6-10"	sun	few	bedding	seed
Drought-tolerant. Distinct markings on the blooms produce a striking effect when viewed at close range. Blooms tend to close when light intensity is reduced.						
<i>Gerbera jamesonii</i> Gerbera, Transvaal Daisy	various	8-24"	sun, semi-shade	few	bedding, cut	seed
Plants produce sporadic bloom. May not produce an extensive display as a bedding plant. Attractive cut flowers.						
<i>Gomphrena globosa</i> Globe Amaranth	purple, orange, lavender, white	12-48"	sun	few	bedding, border, cut, dried	seed
The clover-like blooms will dry and retain their color. Plants require little maintenance. 'Lavender Lady' and 'Strawberry Fields' are tall and best used in the border. 'Buddy' is short and compact. To dry, choose blooms that are just reaching their prime.						
<i>Helianthus annuus</i> Sunflower	orange, yellow	2-14'	sun	powdery mildew	border, cut	seed
Shorter types are useful as border plants in the garden. They produce blooms for most of the season, but often decline after peak bloom. Powdery mildew can cause an unsightly problem.						
<i>Helichrysum bracteatum</i> Strawflower	various	8-48"	sun	few	border, cut, dried	seed
Foliage can be unsightly and ragged. Generally grown as a cut or dried flower.						
<i>Heliotropium arborescens</i> Heliotrope	blue, white	12-24"	sun	few	bedding, container	seed, cuttings
Plants do not have a consistent display of blooms. Blooms are fragrant and sometimes referred to as Summer Lilac.						

Annuals for Sun and Shade (continued)

Name	Flower Color	Height	Exposure	Pests	Uses	Propagation
<i>Hypoestes phyllostachya</i> Polka-Dot Plant	foliage (white or pink markings)	18-24"	sun, semi-shade	few	border, bedding	seed, cuttings
Flowers are inconspicuous. Plants are uniform and require little maintenance. During periods of stress in full sun, the foliage may curl. When weather conditions change, this problem will disappear.						
<i>Impatiens balsamina</i> Touch-Me-Not	various	12-18"	sun, semi-shade	few	border, bedding	seed
Blooms are generally double and in the axil of the foliage. May freely reseed and can become invasive. Common name comes from the seed pods that spring open when ripe.						
<i>Impatiens wallerana</i> Impatiens, Sultana	various	12-24"	shade, semi-shade, sun	mites	border, bedding	seed
Excellent low-maintenance plant that produces blooms until frost. Needs a moist soil for best performance.						
<i>Ipomoea alba</i> Moon Vine	white	vine	sun	few	annual screen	seed
Large, white blooms open late in the afternoon or early evening. Does not readily self-sow.						
<i>Ipomoea tricolor</i> Morning Glory	various	vine	sun	few	annual screen	seed
Vigorous plants that do provide a show early in the day. Readily self-sows and can become an invasive weed.						
<i>Lablab purpureus</i> Hyacinth Bean	lavender	vine	sun	few	annual screen, edible bean	seed
Vigorous plants producing numerous flower stems up to 28" in length. Blooms are followed by purple beans that are also attractive. Hyacinth Beans are an oriental vegetable that should be harvested for culinary purposes before beans fill in the pods.						
<i>Lantana camara</i> Lantana	yellow, orange	24-36"	sun	white fly	border, bedding	seed, cuttings
Generally very low-maintenance. Can be trained into a tree form. Related species are <i>L. montevidensis</i> , a trailing form, and <i>L. tricolor</i> , with distinct fruit form. All parts of the plant are poisonous. Remove fruit to avoid an attraction for children.						
<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> (cool season) Annual Sweet Pea	various	12-18"	sun, semi-shade	few, powdery mildew	bedding, cut	seed
Does not perform well in this area. Plants do not tolerate the heat and generally show little vigor.						
<i>Limonium sinuatum</i> Statice	various	18-24"	sun	few	border, cut, dried	seed
Plants will stunt if left in the flat too long. Blooms can be harvested all season long.						
<i>Lobelia erinus</i> Edging Lobelia	violet, blue	8-12"	sun, semi-shade	few	bedding, edging, container	seed
Tends to suffer in the heat.						
<i>Lobularia maritima</i> (cool season) Sweet Alyssum	pink, white	4-6"	sun, semi-shade	few	bedding, edging	seed
Declines rapidly during hot weather. Remove declining blooms and seed set to promote vigor. May recover vigor during cooler weather in the fall.						
<i>Melampodium paludosum</i> Melampodium	yellow	24-36"	sun, semi-shade	powdery mildew	bedding, border	seed
Produces yellow, daisy-type blooms all season. Very low-maintenance. Powdery mildew may be a problem late in the season. Plants will reseed.						
<i>Mirabilis jalapa</i> Four O'clock	various	2-4'	sun, light shade	few, powdery mildew	bedding	seed
Small blooms open late in the afternoon. Seeds are very hardy and this plant can become an invasive weed that is difficult to eliminate from the garden.						
<i>Nicotiana glauca</i> Flowering Tobacco	various	14-36"	sun	generally few	bedding	seed
Low-maintenance, producing a continuous display until the temperatures get cooler in late summer. May be evening-fragrant. Can be bothered by the same pest and disease problems associated with burley tobacco.						
<i>Nierembergia hippomanica</i> Cupflower	white, blue	8-10"	sun, semi-shade	few	bedding	seed
The white 'Mt. Blanc' was a 1993 AAS winner. Plants start out with superior display but tend to burn out during extremely hot weather.						

Annuals for Sun and Shade (continued)

Name	Flower Color	Height	Exposure	Pests	Uses	Propagation
<i>Nigella damascena</i> Love-in-a-Mist	blue, white	12-14"	sun, semi-shade	few	bedding, dried	seed
Blooms are not especially showy from a distance. Often grown to harvest the inflated seed pods for dried use. Readily self-sows and may be invasive.						
<i>Ocimum basilicum purpurascens</i> Ornamental Basil	purple foliage	18-24"	sun	few	bedding, border, culinary	seed
Flowers should be removed to maintain vigor of the plant. Foliage is very fragrant and can be used in the same manner as green basil. 'Purple Ruffles' has more ruffled foliage. 'Dark Opal' has foliage more typical of basil.						
<i>Pelargonium x hortorum</i> Geranium	various	12"-18"	sun, semi-shade	bacterial stem rot	bedding, border, container	seed, cuttings
Must be deadheaded to maintain vigor. If disease problems occur, geraniums should not be grown in the same location the next year.						
<i>Pentas lanceolata</i> Pentas	various	12-14"	sun	few	bedding, container	seed, cuttings
Various hybrids are available. Deadheading is essential to maintain vigor. Height depends on individual cultivars.						
<i>Petunia x hybrida</i> Petunia	various	12-16"	sun, semi-shade	few	bedding, container	seed
Short internode types do not get as leggy as other types. Regular fertilization and adequate moisture will help maintain vigor. Will tolerate cooler temperatures than other tender annuals.						
<i>Phlox drummondii</i> Annual Phlox	various	6-10"	sun	powdery mildew	bedding, container	seed
Will not tolerate hot temperatures. Tends to burn out quickly in this area.						
<i>Portulaca grandiflora</i> Portulaca, Moss Rose	various	6-10"	sun	few	bedding, container	seed
May reseed. Heat- and drought-tolerant. Bloom colors are very bright. Begins to decline in late summer.						
<i>Ricinus communis</i> Castor Bean	bronze, green foliage	6-12'	sun	few	back of border, accent	seed
Source of castor oil. Ricin, present in the plant, is extremely poisonous . The seeds contain a high concentration of ricin. Soaking the seeds overnight improves germination. A very effective accent plant for the effect of the foliage. May self-sow.						
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> Black-eyed Susan	yellow, bronze	2-3'	sun	fungal problems	bedding, cut	seed
'Indian Summer' is an excellent cultivar. Whether by reseeding or marginally hardy, this plant may persist in the garden. Cutting flowers helps to maintain vigor.						
<i>Sanvitalia procumbens</i> Creeping Zinnia	yellow	4-8"	sun	few	bedding, container	seed
Low habit creates a nice annual groundcover. Vigorous growth in the spring. May be stunted by extreme heat but will rebloom in fall.						
<i>Salvia farinacea</i> Mealycup Sage	blue, white	18-24"	sun	few	bedding, dried	seed
May reseed. Low-maintenance plants that require little attention during the season. Florets drop, but calyxes remain and will dry and keep their color.						
<i>Salvia splendens</i> Scarlet Sage	red, white, purple, salmon	12-18"	sun, semi-shade	few	bedding	seed
In full sun, plants require frequent maintenance to remove declining blooms. In semi-shade, the blooms will hold their color longer and require less maintenance.						
<i>Senecio cineraria</i> Dusty Miller	gray foliage	12-16"	sun	few	bedding, container	seed
Commonly used as an edging plant. Cultivars differ in foliage texture from very coarse to deeply cut.						
<i>Tagetes erecta, Tagetes patula</i> Marigold	orange, yellow, bronze	8-36"	sun	mites	bedding, cut	seed
Easily produce from seed. Wide variation in heights. Different bloom forms are available. May not produce continuous bloom. Foliage is very fragrant. Some deadheading is necessary to maintain appearance.						
<i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i> Mexican Sunflower	orange, yellow	4-6'	sun	mites, thrips, aphids, powdery mildew	back of border, annual hedge	seed
Older cultivars are tall and may require support. Bloom midsummer until fall, but insect problems may leave the plants unsightly. 'Fiesta del Sol', 2000 AAS winner, is dwarf and compact and is a better choice for the garden than older cultivars.						

Annuals for Sun and Shade (continued)

Name	Flower Color	Height	Exposure	Pests	Uses	Propagation
<i>Torenia fournieri</i> Wishbone Flower	pink, purple, white	10-18"	sun, semi-shade	few	bedding	seed
Low-maintenance. Foliage tends to turn purple in full-sun locations. 'Summer Wave' tolerates heat better than other cultivars and is excellent for containers.						
<i>Tropaeolum majus</i> Nasturtium	orange, yellow	10-14"	sun	aphids	bedding, containers	seed
Blooms are often hidden by the foliage. Foliage and flowers are edible and have a peppery flavor.						
<i>Verbena x hybrida</i> Garden Verbena	various	8-14"	sun	mites	bedding, containers	seed
Do not bloom continuously. Cut back after first flush of bloom to promote rebloom. 'Temari' series plants do not require as much maintenance and are excellent choices. Related species <i>V. canadensis</i> cultivars such as 'Homestead' are also excellent for the garden and are short-lived perennials.						
<i>Viola x wittrockiana</i> (cool season) Pansy	various	6-10"	sun	few	bedding, containers	seed
Best planted in the fall. Plants established in the fall will produce 2 to 3 times the number of blooms of spring-established pansies. Will decline rapidly during hot weather.						
<i>Zinnia angustifolia</i> (Syn. <i>Z. linearis</i>) Narrow Leaf Zinnia	orange, yellow, white	12-15"	sun	few	bedding	seed
Very disease-resistant, low-maintenance plant that blooms continuously until frost. Excellent choice for the garden.						
<i>Zinnia elegans</i> Zinnia	various	6-48"	sun	powdery mildew, bacterial leaf spot	bedding, cut	seed
Taller cut-and-come-again types are excellent cut flowers. More compact forms are recommended as bedding plants. These types tend to be disease-prone in this area. 'Profusion' series is more compact in habit and disease-resistant.						
<i>Zinnia haageana</i> Mexican Zinnia	gold, maroon bicolor	8-12"	sun	few	bedding, edging	seed
'Old Mexico' and 'Persian Carpet' are the main cultivars in trade. Plants are disease-resistant but require more maintenance than <i>Z. angustifolia</i> . Deadhead to maintain vigor.						

Speciality Plants for Containers

Container gardening can mean anything from a 6-inch clay pot to a concrete planter 6 feet in diameter. Container gardening requires some special care. Soil mixes should provide adequate drainage. Using "good" garden soil in a container is not recommended, as it will compact and will not drain well enough. Watering is absolutely a must. Depending on the plants, the size of container, and the weather, containers may need to be watered once or twice a day.

Frequent watering will leach fertilizer from the container. Containers will need additional fertilization throughout the growing season to maintain vigor. Generally speaking, the larger the container, the easier it is to maintain.

The following plants are referred to as speciality plants because they are generally only available in larger containers than those used for bedding plants. They also generally cost more than bedding plants. Standards are plants that have been trained into a tree-like form.

Speciality Plants for Containers

Name	Flower Color	Height	Exposure	Pests	Uses	Propagation
<i>Abutilon x hybridum</i> Flowering Maple	various	1-3'	sun	few	hanging baskets, containers	seed, cuttings
Cultivars with variegated foliage are available. Plants generally have pendulous blooms that are more visible when plants are grown in hanging baskets. Newer cultivars have more outward-facing blooms and are excellent in containers. Low-maintenance.						
<i>Acalypha hispida</i> Chenille Plant	red	12-16"	sun, semi-shade	few	hanging baskets, containers	cuttings
Drooping tassel-like blooms are attractive in hanging baskets and are a showy addition to mixed containers. Will perform well as a bedding plant, but would be an expensive addition to the garden if used in this way.						
<i>Acalypha wilkesiana</i> Copperleaf	copper, bronze foliage	3-4'	sun	few	container, bedding	cuttings

Flowers are produced but not as showy as *A. hispida*. Plants are vigorous and can be used as bedding or accent plants in the garden. Sometimes maintained as an interior plant where high light conditions exist.

Speciality Plants for Containers (continued)

Name	Flower Color	Height	Exposure	Pests	Uses	Propagation
<i>Allamanda cathartica</i> Golden Trumpet	yellow	vine	sun	aphids, mealybugs	containers	cuttings
This vigorous tropical vine is excellent as a single staked plant or as an addition to a mixed container. Fertilize regularly and keep evenly moist. Plants must reach a certain maturity to bloom. The larger the plant purchased, the sooner the bloom display begins. Plants are fairly expensive but provide an excellent show. Plants may be overwintered inside if the right conditions exist. If planted in the ground, lift and pot before a hard freeze. Providing the container is not too large, plants grown in containers simply can be moved inside. Cut the plants back and provide as much light as possible. Plants have few pests outdoors, but once they are inside, mealybugs and aphids may become a problem.						
<i>Alocasia macrorrhiza</i> Elephant Ear	foliage, green	4-5'	sun, semi-shade	few	specimen, container	division
Large, showy foliage. A wonderful accent plant for the garden or container. Fleshy rhizome should be lifted in the fall and stored over winter. Various cultivars are available, some with variegated or purple foliage.						
<i>Alternanthera dentata</i> Calico Plant	foliage, purple	1-3'	sun, semi-shade	few	container, hanging basket	cuttings
Several cultivars are available. 'Ruby' (more correctly, 'Rubiginosa') is an excellent addition to a mixed container. Dark purple leaves provide an excellent contrast plant. Some stems are upright, while others are pendulous.						
<i>Angelonia angustifolia</i> Summer Snapdragon	blue, purple, pink	12-14"	sun	few	container, bedding	cuttings
Spiky blooms are a nice addition to mixed containers. Useful as a cut flower.						
<i>Asparagus densiflorus sprengeri</i> Asparagus Fern	green foliage	12-14"	sun	few	hanging basket, container	division
Drooping stems may be over 3' long. The fine texture of the foliage adds interest to a mixed container.						
<i>Begonia x argenteoguttata</i> Angel Wing Begonia	pink, red	2-3'	sun, semi-shade	few	bedding, container	cuttings, seed
Often grown as an interior foliage plant. New introductions such as 'Dragon Wing' are excellent plants for the garden or container and will tolerate full sun.						
<i>Bougainvillea glabra</i> Bougainvillea, Paper Flower	pink, red, purple	2-4"	sun	few	container, standard	cuttings
Grown for the colorful bracts rather than the flowers. Somewhat difficult to grow. Must be actively growing to produce flowers. Once in bloom, the flowers last for a considerable time. Cultivars with variegated foliage are available.						
<i>Brugmansia</i> (var. sp. and hybrids) Angel's Trumpet	various	5-7'	sun	few	accent, container	cuttings, seed
Showy tropical plants for containers or accent plants in the garden. Large, pendulous, trumpet-shaped blooms are extremely showy in the garden. Plants need to be at least 3' tall before they begin flowering. Purchasing larger plants will extend the show in the garden. Without extremely high light conditions in the home, overwintering may be very difficult.						
<i>Calocasia esculenta</i> Taro	green to purple foliage	4-6'	sun	few	accent, container	division
Foliage contains oxalic acid which, if ingested, can cause breathing problems. Culture and use is similar to <i>Alocasia</i> .						
<i>Chlorophytum comosum</i> Spider Plant	green or variegated foliage	10-12"	sun, semi-shade	few	hanging basket, container	Plantlets form at the end of stolens.
Water high in fluoride may cause leaf margins to burn.						
<i>Duranta erecta</i> Duranta	white, blue	2-3'	sun	few	container	division
Generally bloom from midsummer until frost. Excellent addition to mixed containers.						
<i>Evolvulus pilosus</i> Evolvulus	blue	6-10"	sun, semi-shade	few	container, hanging basket	cuttings
'Blue Daze' is a common cultivar. Plants produce blooms all season, and the drooping habit makes this a natural for hanging baskets and mixed containers.						
<i>Fuchsia</i> (hybrids)	various	10-12"	sun, semi-shade	whitefly	hanging baskets, or standard	cuttings
Flowers are so unique and beautiful that it is hard to resist purchasing these plants when seen in full bloom. Most fuchsias are the plants most quickly killed, even by experienced gardeners. Hot weather and allowing plants to dry out for even a short period of time are often the causes of their demise. Some fuchsias appear to be more heat-tolerant; the 'Angel Earrings' series is one example. A group of fuchsias known as the <i>Triphylla</i> hybrids are more heat-tolerant. 'Gartenmeister Bonstedt' is an example. This particular cultivar performs well in full sun.						

Speciality Plants for Containers (continued)

Name	Flower Color	Height	Exposure	Pests	Uses	Propagation
<i>Gardenia jasminoides</i> Gardenia	white	2-3' or standards	sun, semi-shade	few, white fly	container, tree forms	cuttings
It is hard to resist a gardenia when it is in bloom. The fragrance of the flowers is quite pleasant. Gardenias are demanding plants. Cool temperatures in the evening are necessary for bud formation. Proper watering and correct temperatures are necessary to prevent bud drop. If plants are moved outdoors in the summer, semi-shade during the warmest part of the day is probably best.						
<i>Gibasis pellucida</i> Tahitian Bridal Veil	white	trailing	sun, semi-shade	few	hanging baskets, containers	cuttings
Small, white flowers are not showy from a distance. This plant is generally used in interiors. Plants provide a nice, soft texture and drooping habit to mixed containers. Also has potential as a bedding or annual groundcover.						
<i>Helichrysum petiolare</i> Licorice Plant	gray, lime-green foliage	prostrate 2-3"	sun, semi-shade	few	Hanging basket, container	cuttings
Useful as a contrasting plant in containers. The cultivar 'Limelight' has lime-green foliage. Susceptible to root rot if containers do not drain well.						
<i>Ipomoea batata</i> Sweet Potato	chartreuse, purple foliage	6-10"	sun	flea beetles	bedding, hanging basket, containers	cuttings
Most cultivars are extremely vigorous. As a bedding plant, plants spaced 4' apart on center will have more than adequate room. Whether as bedding or container plants, all will produce tubers. Tubers are not especially desirable for eating purposes. Cultivars include: 'Ace of Spades' and 'Blackie', both with purple foliage; 'Margarita', chartreuse foliage; 'Lady Fingers', greenish-purple foliage; and 'Pink Frost', white, pink, and green foliage. All but 'Pink Frost' are extremely vigorous plants.						
<i>Mandevilla sanderi</i> Brazilian Jasmin	red	vine	sun	few	container	cuttings
'Red Riding Hood' is a common cultivar. Flowers are red with a yellow throat. Plants must reach a mature size before they bloom. The larger the plant purchased, the more quickly it will bloom. Once in bloom, plants will continuously bloom until cool weather. Plants can be grown in the ground or containers with some type of support, or they can be allowed to roam freely from the containers. Because the plants are fairly expensive, attempts can be made to overwinter them indoors (see <i>Allamanda</i>). Related species <i>B. boliviensis</i> has white flowers.						
<i>Mandevilla x amabilis</i> Mandevilla	pink	vine	sun	few	container, basket	cuttings
'Alice DuPont' has bright pink blooms and is a common cultivar. Foliage is distinct from other species and is very coarse in texture (see <i>Mandevilla sanderi</i> for general comments).						
<i>Nephrolepis exaltata</i> Boston Fern	green foliage	3-5'	shade, semi-shade, sun	few	hanging basket, container	division
Providing they receive adequate watering, ferns are a relatively low-maintenance plant. Several cultivars exist. 'Dallas' is a more compact form. 'Kimberly Queen' is upright and tolerates full sun. Related species <i>N. cordifolia</i> has an erect habit.						
<i>Pelargonium peltatum</i> Ivy Leaf Geranium	various	1-3'	sun, semi-shade	oedema	hanging basket, container	cuttings
Numerous cultivars are available. Plants are fairly vigorous and bloom continuously. Excellent in large, mixed containers.						
<i>Plumbago auriculata</i> Cape Leadwort	blue, white	2-3'	sun	few	containers, bedding	seed, cuttings
Plants are fairly vigorous and bloom continuously. Excellent in large containers. Not as showy when used as a bedding plant. Perennial farther south, where plants are much larger and are excellent planted in mass.						
<i>Scaevola aemula</i> Fan Flower	blue, white	8-10"	sun	few	hanging baskets, containers	cuttings
Loves the heat, producing continuous bloom. Low-maintenance.						
<i>Setcreasea purpurea</i> Purple Heart	purple foliage, pink flowers	8-10"	sun, semi-shade	few	hanging baskets, containers	cuttings
Long considered a common houseplant, it is a great success in the garden. Plants are vigorous and spread rapidly as an annual groundcover. In containers the trailing habit creates great contrast. Although pink flowers are produced, this plant is mainly grown for the effect of the foliage.						
<i>Strobilanthes dyerianus</i> Persian Shield	purple foliage	2-3'	sun	few	container, bedding	cuttings
Another houseplant that has found its way into the garden. Low-maintenance.						
<i>Sutera grandiflora</i> Bacopa	white, pink, blue	trailing	sun, semi-shade	few	hanging baskets, containers	cuttings
Plants must have adequate moisture to maintain vigor. Annual ground cover.						

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