



Department of Horticulture

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service • West Lafayette, IN

Annual Flowers

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Annuals offer almost unlimited versatility. They're available in a wide range of colors and sizes, and various species offer solutions for sun and shade plantings.

Each year new cultivars are being introduced by seed companies. Most of these are hybrids which have

been selected for their superiority over existing cultivars or species. When making selections, consult the latest descriptions in publications and catalogs. Also visit Floricultural demonstrations such as the Purdue University Horticulture Gardens and the University of Illinois Trial Garden.

| Botanical common name | Situation | Color | Height (inches/ centimeters) | Flowering season | Sowing* | Remarks |
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| Flossflower <i>Ageratum</i> <i>houstonianum</i> | sun semi-shade | blue, lavender, pink, white | 6-18/15-46 | June-Sept. | A-May B-April | The dwarf types are well suited for bedding; the taller ones are good for mass effects and cuttings. |
| Hollyhock <i>Alcea rosea</i> | sun | assorted | 12-72/31-1.8M. | July-Sept. | A-May | The annual varieties are similar to the biennial ones. Taller varieties are for background or screen planting only. Dwarf types are now available. |
| Tampala <i>Amaranthus tricolor</i> | sun | foliage— red-green variegated | 6-36/15-91 | June-Sept. | A-May B-April | Desirable for colorful foliage. Often susceptible to diseases which may kill plants. |
| Common Snapdragon <i>Antirrhinum majus</i> | sun | assorted | 6-36/15-91 | June-Oct. | A-May B-March C-March | The semi-tall and dwarf sorts are best suited, for they require no staking. Well suited for cutting and bedding. Use rust resistant strains only. New varieties are continuous bloomers. |
| African Daisy <i>Arctotis</i> <i>stoechadifolia</i> | sun; light, sandy soil | white, red, orange, yellow pink, apricot | 9-10/3-25 | July-Sept. | A-May B-March | Best in areas with cool night temperatures. |
| Bedding Begonia, Wax Begonia <i>Begonia x semper- florens-cultorum</i> | sun, shade (depends on variety) | assorted flower and foliage | 6-15/15-38 | June-Sept. | B-January | Many new flower and foliage types. Ideal for shady locations. |
| Swan-River Daisy <i>Brachyscome iberidifolia</i> | sun, semi-shade | assorted | 12/31 | July-Sept. | A-May B-April | A free-flowering, dwarf-growing annual which is well suited for edging flower beds. |

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| Flowering Kale and Flowering Cabbage <i>Brassica oleracea</i> | sun | red or white variegation on blue-green foliage | 10-12/25 | April-Oct. | B-April | Color is best in cool weather. Control insects such as cabbage worm and cabbage looper. |
| Amethyst Flower <i>Browallia speciosa</i> | semi-shade | blue, white | 8-12/20-31 | July-Sept. | A-May | A free-flowering plant which is well suited for bedding in shady areas. |
| Calendula, Pot Marigold <i>Calendula officinalis</i> | semi-shade | yellow, orange | 10-15/25-38 | July-Oct. | A-April B-April or March | An old-fashioned flowering plant which has been greatly improved by plant breeding. It is well suited for cutting. |
| China Aster <i>Callistephus chinensis</i> | sun, semi-shade | assorted | 12-36/31-91 | July-Oct. | A-April B-April | Asters are very susceptible to Aster Wilt and Aster Yellows. Buy seed of wilt resistant varieties . Plant asters in a new location each year and keep leaf hoppers and aphids under control. |
| Ornamental Pepper <i>Capsicum annuum</i> | sun | white | 10/25 | June-Oct. | B-April | Grown for colorful fruit in black-red, purple, red, yellow. Many cultivars available. |
| Madagascar Periwinkle <i>Catharanthus rosea</i> | sun, semi-shade | assorted | 12-15/31-38 | June-Oct. | B-April, March | A free-flowering plant with dark laurel-like foliage. Well suited for bedding. |
| Crested Coxcomb <i>Celosia cristata</i> | sun | yellow, orange, red | 6-36/15-91 | June-Oct. | A-May B-April | Extremely easy to grow. Heat and drought resistant. Excellent for drying. |
| Plume Celosia <i>Celosia cristata</i> | sun | yellow, orange, red | 6-36/15-91 | June-Oct. | A-May B-April | Extremely easy to grow. Heat and drought resistant. Excellent for drying. |
| Cornflower <i>Centaurea cyanus</i> | sun | assorted | 20-30/51-76 | June-Oct. | A-April, May, June B-April | If continuous flowering is desired, make sowings at monthly intervals. They are self-feeding after once well established. Suitable for cutting. |
| Dusty Miller <i>Centaurea gymnocarpa</i> | sun | gray foliage purple foliage | 24-30/61-76 | Apr.-Oct. | A-May B-March | Grown for foliage. |
| Sweet-sultan <i>Centaurea moschata</i> | sun | white, yellow, purple | 12-20/31-51 | July-Sept. | A-May B-April | Sweet-scented flowers of artistic shape. The flowers are borne on long stems and are very suitable for cutting. |
| Feverfew <i>Chrysanthemum parthenium</i> | sun | yellow | 24-36/61-91 | June-Aug. | A-May B-March | Aromatic. |
| Silver Lace Dusty Miller <i>Chrysanthemum parthenium</i> | sun | gray foliage | 6-8/15-20 | May-Oct. | A-May B-March | Grown for foliage, excellent for edging in borders and planters. |
| Spiderflower <i>Cleome hasslerana</i> | sun | pink, purple, white | 36-48/91-1.2M. | June-Oct. | A-May B-April | Attractive in large beds, tall borders and backgrounds. Stands heat, plants will self-sow. |
| Coleus, Flame Nettle <i>Coleus x hybridus</i> | shade | green to red foliage | 12-30/31-76 | June-Sept. | B-March | Excellent plant for shady, moist areas. Many new cultivars available. |
| Rocket Larkspur <i>Consolida ambigua</i> | sun | pink, blue, white | 30/76 | June-Sept. | A-April B-May | Perfectly hardy, and after they once become established, will seed them- |

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| Calliopsis <i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i> | sun, semi-shade | assorted (reds and yellows) | 10-24/25-61 | July-Oct. | A-May B-April | selves. An old standby which is well suited for cutting. |
| Common Cosmos <i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i> | sun | assorted (reds and yellows) | 18-60/46-1.5M. | July-Oct. | A-May B-April | Early flowering varieties which begin flowering in July and continue until late autumn, are best suited. They are well suited for background planting. |
| Chinese Forget-Me-Not <i>Cynoglossum amabile</i> | sun | blue | 20/51 | July-Sept. | A-May | A plant of easy culture, which produces long stems and flowers suitable for cutting. Remove flowers for continuous bloom. |
| Dahlia <i>Dahlia pinnata</i> | sun | assorted | 6-36/15-91 | June-Sept. | B-March | Seeding dahlias often are uneven and flower poorly. |
| Garden Pink, Rainbow Pink <i>Dianthus chinensis</i> | sun, semi-shade | red, lavender, pink | 10-12/25-31 | July-Oct. | A-May B-May | Flowers of brilliant colors with sweet fragrance. They are well suited for bedding, edging and cutting. |
| Common Foxglove <i>Digitalis purpurea</i> | sun, semi-shade | lavender, pink, white | 24-48/61-1.2M. | June-July | A-April B-March | Treat as biennial. Gloxinia like flowers, splendid for beds and borders. |
| Winter Cape-Marigold <i>Dimorphotheca sinuata</i> | sun | orange, yellow, purple | 12/31 | July-Oct. | A-May B-March | Very attractive and useful for mass plantings and as a cut flower. |
| Poppy <i>Eschscholzia californica</i> | sun | assorted yellow, orange, red, white | 8-12/20-31 | July-Sept. | A-May B-April | Dainty flowers and gray-green foliage make this plant a "must" in your garden. Grows under exceedingly dry conditions. |
| Indian Blanket <i>Gaillardia pulchella</i> | sun | yellow, red | 12-24/31-61 | July-Oct. | A-May 1 B-April | One of the very best flowering annuals. They are well suited for bedding and cutting. Many of the new hybrids are of merit. |
| Gazania, Treasure Flower <i>Gazania rigens</i> | sun | white, yellow, red, orange | 8-12/20-31 | June-Sept. | A-May B-April | Large exotic daisy-like blooms for dwarf masses. |
| Satin Flower, Clarkia <i>Godetia grandiflora</i> | semi-shade | red, white | 12/31 | July-Sept. | B-March | Good for beds and borders in cool, moist soil. |
| Globe Amaranth <i>Gomphrena globosa</i> | sun | orange, red, purple, white | 18-30/46-76 | July-Oct. | A-May B-April | A showy plant with clover-like flower heads. The flowers may be dried and used in winter bouquets. |
| Baby's Breath <i>Gypsophila elegans</i> | sun | white | 12-18/31-46 | July-Sept. | A-May B-April | The Gypsophilas are quick-blooming, short season plants. Several direct sowings can be made. Excellent filler in arrangements. |
| Common Sunflower <i>Helianthus annuus</i> | sun | yellow | 24-72/61-1.8M. | July-Aug. | A-May | Should be used only as background or screen plantings. Also a wide try a range of dwarf varieties. |

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| Strawflower <i>Bracteantha bracteata</i> | sun | yellow, pink, white, red | 20-30/51-76 | Aug.-Oct. | A-May B-April, March | Helichrysums are ornamental garden plants and the flowers are highly prized for winter bouquets. Flowers for drying should be gathered when partially unfolded and suspended, heads downward in a cool place until dry. |
| Common Heliotrope <i>Heliotropium arborescens</i> | sun | purple, white | 24-28/61-71 | July-Sept. | A-May B-April | Adds fragrance and beauty to any garden, succeeds in any good soil. |
| Rose Mallow <i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i> | sun | yellow, white, red, pink, mixed | 36-60/ 91-1.5M. | July-Sept. | A-May B-April | Usually freezes to soil level, but produces new growth each season. |
| Goldencup <i>Hunnemannia tumariifolia</i> | semi-shade | golden yellow | 15/38 | July-Sept. | B-April | A beautiful golden-yellow, poppy-like flower which is very well suited for cutting. Difficult to transplant unless pot grown. |
| Globe Candytuft <i>Iberis umbellata</i> | semi-shade | pink, red, purple | 12/31 | July-Sept. | A-May, June | Well suited for mass planting and edging. A successive planting will provide flowers throughout the summer. |
| Garden Balsam <i>Impatiens balsamina</i> | sun | white, purple, red | 6-24/15-61 | June-Oct. | A-May B-April | Old favorite for beds and borders. Does best in rich, well-drained, slightly moist soil. |
| Impatiens Sultana, Patience Plant <i>Impatiens walleriana</i> | semi-shade | purple, red, pink, white | 6-24/15-61 | June-Sept. | A-May B-April | Excellent bedding plants. May be cut back and potted to bloom in the house during winter. |
| Morning Glory <i>Ipomoea</i> spp. | sun | white, pink, red, blue, purple | 72+/1.8M. | July-Oct. | A-May | Soak seed in water the night before sowing. Vining plant that can form a temporary dense screen. |
| Crape Myrtle <i>Lagerstroemia indica</i> | sun | white, pink, red, lavender, blue | 21/53 | June-Sept. | B-March | This plant may survive the winter in southern Indiana. |
| Sweet Pea <i>Lathyrus odoratus</i> | semi-shade | white, purple, lavender | 60/1.5M. (vine) | June-July | A-Feb., March | Sow sweet peas early in deep rich soil. They require considerable water. |
| Russian Statice <i>Limonium sinuatum</i> | semi-shade | white, lavender | 20/51 | July-Sept. | B-April, March | Flowers may be dried and used in winter bouquets. |
| Flowering Flax <i>Linum grandiflorum</i> | sun | red | 12-18/31-46 | July-Sept. | A-May B-April | A striking annual plant worthy of more extensive use. |
| Edging Lobelia <i>Lobelia erinus</i> | semi-shade | blue, red | 4-10/10-25 | June-Aug. | B-April | Highly desirable for small beds, edging and ribbon bedding. |
| Sweet Alyssum <i>Lobularia maritima</i> | semi-shade | white, lavender | 4-10/10-25 | June-Sept. | A-May B-April | A very desirable edging plant. Is very showy when associated with blue Lobelia, dwarf Ageratum or dwarf forget-me-nots. Long season of bloom. May tend to go out in summer. |

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| Honesty <i>Lunaria annua</i> | sun | red-purple, white | 24-36/61-91 | July | A-May | The flowers are inconsequential, but the round flat seed pods (a silvery disc) are useful in winter arrangements. |
| Annual flowering Lupine <i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i> | semi-shade | assorted | 24/61 | July-Sept. | A-May | Free flowering annual plants, with long, graceful spikes, pea-shaped flowers. Very good for |
| Unicorn Plant <i>Martynia proboscidea</i> | sun | creamy white | 18/46 | July-Sept. | B-April | Unusual seed pod for dried arrangements. |
| Monkey Flower <i>Mimulus x hybridus</i> | shade | red, orange, yellow, blue, violet, purple | 12-24/31-61 | June-Aug. | B-April C-March | Grow in cool, shaded location, high organic matter. |
| Four-O'clock <i>Mirabilis jalapa</i> always | sun | pink, red, yellow, white | 24/61 | July-Oct. | A-May | An old-fashioned flower or bushy habit. It is an interesting subject in any garden. |
| Bells-of-Ireland <i>Molucella laevis</i> | sun | white | 24-36/61-91 | July-Sept. | A-Sept. B-March | The enlarged green calyx of this plant may be harvested and used for dried arrangements. |
| Forget-Me-Not <i>Myosotis sylvatica</i> | sun, semi-shade | yellow, blue, pink, white | 6-12/15-31 | May-Aug. | | A biennial which will produce a late summer bloom as an annual. If overwintering, it will fill in around spring flowering bulbs. |
| Flowering Tobacco <i>Nicotiana glauca</i> | sun | white, pink, red, green | 24-36/61-91 | July-Oct. | A-May B-April | Flowers open early in the evening. White flowers emit sweet perfume. Suitable for large bedding. Useless as a cut flower. |
| Blue Cup Flower <i>Nierembergia hippomanica</i> | semi-shade | lavender, blue, white | 6-18/15-46 | June-Sept. | B-March | Wonderful for edgings or in rock gardens. Effective in pots or as cut flowers. |
| Love-in-a-mist <i>Nigella damascena</i> | sun | blue, purple, white | 18/46 | July-Oct. | A-May | A compact, free-flowering plant with long stems. Very desirable for cutting. |
| Ornamental Basil <i>Ocimum basilicum</i> | sun | pink, white | 15/38 | May-Oct. | A-May B-March, April | Variety 'Dark Opal' has attractive purple leaves. Very pleasant fragrance. Flowers are relatively inconspicuous. |
| Corn Poppy <i>Papaver rhoeas</i> | sun | assorted | 12-20/31-51 | June-July | A-April B-May | Sow seed early where they are to flower. They dislike transplanting. Successive sowings may be made to provide continuous flowering. |
| Bedding Geranium <i>Pelargonium x hortorum</i> | sun | white, pink, red, rose | 12-24/31-61 | May-Sept. | B-March | Seed propagated types are more rugged for outdoor use. They are also free of disease. |
| Penstemon <i>Penstemon gloxinoides</i> | sun | white, purple- red, red | 24-48/61-1.2M. | July-Sept. | A-April | Gloxinia-like blooms on tall spikes. |
| Fountain Grass <i>Pennisetum setaceum</i> | sun | white, pink purple | 40/1M. | July-Sept. | A-May B-March | Excellent grass, several color cultivars in trade. |

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| Common Garden Petunia <i>Petunia x hybrida</i> | sun, semi-shade | assorted | 12-18/31-46 | June-Oct. | A-May B-April | One of the most outstanding bedding and edging plants. Single, flowering varieties are generally considered best for bedding purposes. |
| Annual Phlox <i>Phlox drummondii</i> | sun, semi-shade | assorted (no blue) | 6-15/15-38 | July-Sept. | A-May B-April | One of the easiest annuals to grow. Very well suited for bedding and edging. Mixed colors are very pleasing. Long season of bloom. |
| Chinese Lantern <i>Physalis alkekengi</i> | sun | red | 24-61 | Aug.-Sept. | A-May B-April | Red papery capsule is valued for use in dried arrangements. Growth habit of this plant is a spreading vine. |
| Moss Rose <i>Portulaca grandiflora</i> | sun, semi-shade | red, yellow, white, rose | 6/15 | June-Sept. | A-May B-April | Will thrive well in the poorest of soil and under dry conditions. Well suited for covering steep banks. Self-sow profusely. |
| Castor Bean <i>Ricinus communis</i> | sun | green, blue foliage | 24-84/61-2.1M. | May-Oct. | A-May | Excellent for large screen plantings. Beans are poisonous. Dwarf varieties are available. |
| Cone Flower <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> | sun | yellow | 24/61 | June-Sept. | A-May B-April | One of the most satisfactory and best keeping annual flowers with a long season of bloom. |
| Painted Tongue <i>Salpiglossis sinuata</i> | semi-shade | assorted | 24/61 | | B-April | An aristocrat of the annual flower garden if well grown. Requires a rich soil which is well prepared. |
| Mealy-Cup Sage <i>Salvia farinacea</i> | sun | blue, purple, white | 24-36/61-91 | July-Oct. | A-May B-March April | Free-flowering plants which are attractive in borders and small beds. |
| Scarlet Sage <i>Salvia splendens</i> | sun | scarlet, red, white, pink | 18-30/46-76 | Aug.-Oct. | A-May B-April March | Bloom freely during late summer and fall. Salvia plants are commonly used for bedding, but for best results they should only be used in limited amounts. The flowers are of no value for cutting. Generally, the shorter the variety, the earlier they will bloom. |
| Creeping Zinnia <i>Sanvitalia procumbens</i> | sun, semi-shade | yellow | 8/20 | June-Oct. | A-May | The plants are prostrate in habit and produce flowers much like tiny Zinnias. Very useful for bedding, as they make ideal ground covers. Long season of bloom. |
| Sweet Scabious <i>Scabiosa atropurpurea</i> | sun, semi-shade | assorted | 24/61 | July-Oct. | A-May B-April | A very desirable flower for cutting. If faded flowers are removed, the plants will continue to flower throughout the summer. |
| Dusty Miller 'Diamond' <i>Senecio cineraria</i> | sun | gray foliage | 24/61 | May-Oct. | A-May B-March | Excellent for edging in borders and planters. Cultivar 'Diamond' is most often planted selection. |

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| Dusty Miller <i>Sececio viva-viva</i> | sun | gray foliage white flowers | 24/61 | Apr.-Oct. | A-May B-March | Grown for long, coarse dissected foliage. |
| African Marigold American Marigold <i>Tagetes erecta</i> | sun | yellow, orange | 12-40/31-1M. | July-Oct. | A-May B-April | Marigolds afford a wealth of color in yellow, orange and bronze. The taller forms are well suited for mass effects and cuttings. |
| French Marigold <i>Tagetes patula</i> | sun | orange, yellow, bronze | 6-12/15-31 | June-Oct. | A-May B-April | One of the most useful and colorful of bedding plants. Easy to grow and free of diseases and pests. |
| Signet Marigold <i>Tagetes tenuifolia</i> | sun | yellow | 24/61 | July-Oct. | A-May B-April | Good for accent plants. Dissected foliage. 'Pumila' group includes various cultivars of low dwarf, compact habit, 1 foot or less. |
| Jewels of Opar <i>Talinum paniculatum</i> | sun | pink | 18/46 | July-Sept. | B-March | Tiny flowers on stalks set small red 'jewel-like' seed. |
| Orange Lantern Vine <i>Thunbergia gregorii</i> | sun | orange | Vine | July-Sept. | A-May B-April | A twining vine, readily grown from seed. |
| Mexico Sunflower <i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i> | sun | orange-red, red | 48/1.2M. | July-Sept. | A-May | Stately plant with single, dahlia-like flowers. Excellent for backgrounds or hedges. |
| Wishbone Flower Bluewings <i>Torenia fournieri</i> | semi-shade | blue, purple | 12/31 | July-Sept. | A-May C-March | Fine for beds, borders, pots, window boxes and rock gardens. |
| Blue Lace Flower <i>Trachymene coerulea</i> | semi-shade | blue | 24/61 | July-Sept. | A-May | Resembles Queen Ann's Lace which is common along roadsides. Good for cutting. |
| Garden Nasturtium, Tall Nasturtium <i>Tropaeolum majus</i> | semi-shade | yellow, orange, red | 12/31 | July-Oct. | A-May | The dwarf flowering sorts are best suited for edging and cut flowers. Climbing varieties may be trellised. |
| Garden Verbena <i>Verbena x hybrida</i> | sun, semi-shade | blue, red, white | 12/31 | July-Oct. | A-May B-April, March | Verbenas are free-flowering plants which are well suited for bedding and edging work. Some varieties are well suited as cut flowers. |
| Viola <i>Viola cornuta</i> | semi-shade | blue, gold, red, apricot | 6/15 | June-Oct. | B-February | Performs best in cool temperatures and moist soil. Hybrids are more vigorous. |
| Garden Pansy <i>Viola x wittrockiana</i> | semi-shade | assorted | 10/25 | May-Aug. | B-March C-Aug. | Sow seed in hotbed in early spring and transplant to garden in May. The best plants are obtained by planting seed in a well prepared cold frame in Aug. and transplanting in special prepared beds in early spring. New hybrids are heat tolerant. |

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| Common Zinnia <i>Zinnia elegans</i> | sun | assorted | 6-40/15-1M. | June-Oct. | A-May B-April, March | One of the outstanding bedding and cut-flowers. The small flowering types are especially well suited. Many new hybrids offer a wide selection in flower type and color, and plant height. |
| Mexican Zinnia Spreading Zinnia <i>Zinnia haageana</i> | sun | yellow, gold, mahogany | 12-18/31-46 | June-Oct. | A-May B-March, April | Attractive multicolored flowers. Plants are mildew resistant. |

*Note: A-Sow seed directly in bed, border or in rows where they are to flower.
 B-Sow seed indoors or in hotbeds and transplant to garden.
 C-Sow seed in coldframe and transplant to garden.

For more information on the subject discussed in this publication, consult your local office of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service.

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