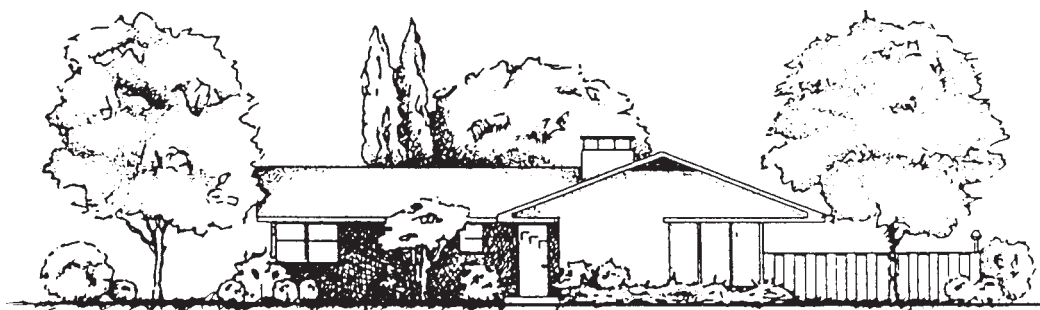


FLOWERING ANNUALS

Landscaping



Annuals are favorite garden flowers because of their quick, long-lasting bloom and bright, showy colors. Easy-to-grow annuals add warmth and cheerfulness to the landscape. Annuals can be started from seed, or the plants can be purchased from garden centers, flower shops and stores.

Annuals often are classified as tender (T), half-hardy (HH) or hardy (H). This refers to their ability to withstand cold winter temperatures and early spring frosts. A hardy annual will begin growth in the spring from self-sown seed that survives the winter. The plants may or may not be winter hardy. Half-hardy annual plants and their seed will withstand some cold but not hard frosts. The seed will not survive winter temperatures, but will germinate in cold soil when sown outdoors in the early spring. Seedlings will not be damaged by a light frost if they have not emerged from the soil. A tender annual cannot withstand freezing temperatures. The seed must be sown after the danger of frost has passed. Most annuals are tender, and many perennials are grown as annuals because they are not winter hardy in Kansas.

Annuals have both advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, annuals provide an opportunity to try new kinds of flowers and change the flower bed color scheme each year. Besides easier bed preparation and easier weed control, annuals offer instant blooming when greenhouse-started plants are used. Their disadvantages include the yearly expense of purchasing plants, the delay in flowering if starting plants from seed sown directly in the garden, the delay in planting if the spring is unusually cold or wet and the need for annual ground preparation. The decision to grow annuals versus perennials—or a combination of the two—is a personal choice, depending upon the amount of time and money a person wishes to spend in the garden.

Numerous cultivated varieties and species of annuals are available to the gardener. When choosing annuals, keep in mind the color scheme of your garden, the space available, the height range of the species, whether you will want cut flowers for use indoors, and the degree of maintenance required for the flower bed.

Recommended Annuals for Kansas

Ageratum, Flossflower, *Ageratum houstonianum* (HH). Ageratum, an old favorite for the annual flower bed, has small blue flowers, grows 4 to 12 inches tall, and makes an excellent border for sunny locations. It will also do well in



Annuals can be used in a variety of ways. Here, a border of petunias is repeated in containers and hanging baskets.

partial shade, preferably afternoon shade. The cultivar Blue Puffs is a standard bedding plant. There are some white varieties that will perform better in the shade than under full sun conditions. These plants are basically disease- and insect-free.

Cup Flowers, *Nierembergia hippomanica violacea* (T). Cup flower is a little-known annual with excellent characteristics. It flowers continually throughout the summer, peaking in July and August, bearing small lavender to blue star-shaped blossoms. Forming 6- to 9-inch mounds, it can withstand full sun conditions and does well in containers and as a border plant. The varieties Purple Robe and White Robe are most common. The variety Mont Blanc offers white flowers and a shorter height than the Robe series.

Flowering or Ornamental Tobacco, *Nicotiana glauca* (T). A member of the petunia family, this attractive species of tobacco is a welcome addition to the selection of bedding plants. The flowers of white, pink, red, yellow, lime green and lavender form on stalks above the rosette of foliage. The plants range from 1 to 3 feet tall and are an excellent choice for the middle to back of a flower bed in full sun. Once the first flush of flowering is complete, the flowering stems should be cut back to encourage continued bloom through the summer. The Nicki series is very popular.

Geranium, *Pelargonium hortorum* (T). The geranium is probably the most labor-consuming annual for the garden. The old, faded flower heads need to be removed weekly through the summer to encourage continued bloom. If not, several diseases can occur when spent flowers fall on the foliage and create pockets of moisture that allow fungal spores to germinate. Geraniums range in height from 12 to 20 inches and have a round growth habit. Flower color range includes red, pink, salmon, white and a few bicolors of red or pink with white. Geraniums are suited to massive color displays or container growing. The ivy geranium, *Pelargonium peltatum*, is used for hanging baskets or to cascade over porch boxes. But, it does not perform well under very hot conditions. Geraniums need a sunny site and require mulching to maintain cool soil temperatures for proper root growth.

Madagascar Periwinkle, *Catharanthus roseus*, formerly *Vinca rosea* (T). An excellent annual for full sun and dry conditions, this species forms uniform mounds of glossy dark green foliage covered with flowers in shades of white, pink and rose. The popular “Cooler” and “Pacifica” series grow 10 to 14 inches high at maturity. This annual is heat-tolerant, withstands pollution and is an excellent choice in urban settings.

Marigold, *Tagetes* spp. (HH). Marigolds are probably the number-one bedding plant for Kansas. They come in a range of heights and flower shapes. The French marigold is commonly two-toned in shades of yellow, orange or red-brown with crimson and maroon. The flowers may be single, double, or the anemone-type head. The African marigold is distinguished by large, globe shaped flower

heads in shades of white through pale yellow to yellow, gold and orange. The triploid marigold, a hybrid between the French and African marigolds, can have flowers of African or French of an intermediate type. French marigolds are commonly used in the front to middle of the flower bed, since they range in height from 6 to 18 inches. The African marigolds are taller plants, ranging from 10-inch dwarfs to 36-inch-tall cultivars. Although triploid marigolds tend to have a dwarf growth habit—10 to 15 inches—and poorer germination, they are more heat-tolerant than other marigolds. Spider mites can become a problem during the hottest part of the summer. Most marigolds have a strong odor to the foliage, but some odorless ones are now available. The Antigua, Galore and Inca series of African marigolds, the series Janie and Aurora of the French type and Zenith series of the triploids all grow well in Kansas.

The Signet marigold, while not common, is becoming more popular due to its dwarf, compact, dainty appearance. Its foliage is extremely fine and the plants are no more than 8 to 10 inches tall. Several cultivars are available with single flowers in shades of yellow, orange or gold. They will flower freely throughout the summer when grown in full sun to partial shade conditions.

Petunia, *Petunia* hybrids (HH). The ever-popular petunia is available in shades of white, pink, red, burgundy, blue, purple, yellow and as pinwheels and picotees. The flowers can be single or double. The plants are classified as grandifloras (few but very large flowers 3 to 5 inches across) or multiflora (many but smaller flowers 2 to 3 inches across). Petunias prefer a full sun to partial shade location where they can spread outwards to 12 to 18 inches and form mounds 8 to 15 inches tall. Given adequate moisture, they will flower profusely throughout the summer.



Sweet alyssum is used as the edging plant, backed by dianthus in a contrasting color.



Masses of annuals add color to a landscape.

Plumed Cockscomb, *Celosia cristata* (T). Plumed cockscomb offers a good flower shape for the garden. These brightly colored flowers, available in red, orange, yellow, gold and pink, can be used in dry flower arrangements. Plant height varies from 1 to 2½ feet. This species is best adapted to full to partial sun locations.

Rose Moss, Moss Rose, Portulaca, *Portulaca grandiflora* (T). Rose moss is a drought- and heat-resistant plant suited to Kansas. This pest-free, low-growing succulent will thrive under adverse conditions, forming colorful blankets of flowers. However, the flowers do not open on overcast days and will close as light intensity drops at sunset. The Sunglo series and the Calypso Mixture have performed well in Kansas.

Salvia, Red Salvia, *Salvia splendens* (T); **Mealycup Sage**, *S. Farinacea* (HH). Two species of salvia are commonly grown as annual flowers—the more common red salvia and the lesser-known mealycup sage or blue salvia. Red salvia is best grown in a sunny location that receives some late afternoon shade. Cultivars of red salvia are available with red, purple or white flowers. The purple and white flowering forms require more shade as they appear to be less vigorous plants. The flowers are borne on spikes above the dark green foliage and offer a showy display of color throughout the summer. The dwarf cultivars are more suited to containers and urban lots while the taller cultivars (above 20 inches) perform well in island beds and in large mass displays.

Mealycup sage, also known as blue salvia, has spikes of pale blue flowers from late spring until frost. Victoria, an attractive cultivar with intense blue flowers, reaches a

height of 18 inches and a spread of about 14 inches. Mealycup sage, a dependable annual year after year, has gained tremendously in popularity and availability.

Snapdragon, *Antirrhinum majus* (HH). The snapdragon has been a favorite flower of children for many generations. It is available in a wide range of colors, often sold as a mixture of colors rather than single shades. The dwarf series, Floral Carpet and Chimes, are suited to flower borders and do not break over during rainstorms. Taller cultivars (the Rocket series), grown for cut flowers, will require staking. This annual will do well in sun or partial shade. Removing older, faded flowers will encourage continued bloom through the summer.

Spider Flower, *Cleome hasslerana* (HH). An annual that deserves more attention, spider flower is an excellent choice for hot, dry, windy, sunny locations. Reaching a height of 3 to 4 feet, spider flower makes an excellent backdrop for shorter annuals. The plant bears flowers throughout the summer. It is available in white, pink, lilac, violet and red, and should be used in mass plantings.

Sultana, Impatiens, Busy Lizzie, *Impatiens wallerana* (T). The No. 1 bedding plant nationwide, the impatiens is tops for the shade. During the hottest part of the summer, it will have a very high demand for water. The plant is available in numerous varieties ranging in height from 6 to 18 inches and flower colors from white through pink to red, lavenders and oranges. A few new varieties have double flowers. Another reason to growing this annual is the fact that the red and pink flowers will attract hummingbirds.

Sunflower, *Helianthus annuus* (H). An ever-popular plant, sunflowers are identified with Kansas' prairie-scape.

New dwarf varieties reach a mature height of 30 to 40 inches; these include Sunspot, which produces single, golden-yellow flowers with large seed heads ideal for birds, and Variety Teddy Bear, which has double flowers.

Other Annuals for Kansas

Amaranthus, Jacob’s Coat, *Amaranthus tricolor* (T)
Annual Phlox, *Phlox drummondii* (HH)
Arctotis, African Daisy, *Arctotis stoechadifolia* (T)
Bachelor’s Button, Cornflower, *Centaurea cyanus* (H)
Balsam, *Impatiens balsamina* (H)
Begonia, fibrous rooted, *Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum* (T)
Bells of Ireland, *Molucella laevis* (H)
Black-eyed Susan Vine, *Thunbergia alata* (HH)
Browallia, Sapphire flower, *Browallia speciosa* (T)
Burning Bush, Summer cypress, *Kochia scoparia* (HH)
California Poppy, *Eschscholzia californica* (H)
Calliopsis, *Coreopsis tinctoria* (HH)
Candytuft, *Iberis umbellata* (H)
Canterbury Bells, Bellflower, *Campanula medium* (H)
Castor Bean, *Ricinus communis* (T)
China Pink, *Dianthus chinensis* (H)
Coleus, *Coleus hybridus* (T)
Cosmos, *Cosmos bipinnatus* (HH)
Creeping Zinnia, *Sanvitalia procumbens* (T)
Dahlberg Daisy, *Dyssodia tenuiloba* (H)
Dusty Miller, *Senecio cineraria* (H)
Firecracker Plant, Cigar plant, *Cuphea ignea* (T)
Flowering Kale, Ornamental Cabbage, *Brassica oleracea* (H)
Four o’clock, *Mirabilis jalapa* (HH)
Gaillardia, annual, *Gaillardia* species (HH)
Gazania, *Gazania* species (HH)
Gerbera, *Gerbera jamesonii* (T)
Globe Amaranth, *Gomphrena globosa* (T)
Lobelia, *Lobelia erinus* (T)
Mexican Sunflower, *Tithonia roundifolia* (HH)
Morning Glory, *Ipomea purpurea* (HH)
Nasturtium, *Tropaeolum majus* (T)
Ornamental Pepper, *Capsicum annuum* (T)
Snow-on-the-Mountain, *Euphorbia marginata* (HH)
Strawflower, *Helichrysum bracteatum* (HH)
Sweet Alyssum, *Lobularia maritima* (H)
Sweet William, *Dianthus barbatus* (HH)
Verbena, *Verbena x hybrida* (HH)
Wallflower, *Cheiranthus cheiri* (H)
Zinnia, *Zinnia* species (HH)

Heat-tolerant annuals

Cockscomb, *Celosia*
Creeping Zinnia, *Sanvitalia*
Dusty Miller, *Senecio*

About the authors:

Gustaaf A. van der Hoeven is a Landscape and Environmental Horticulture Specialist; and **Kimberly Williams** is Assistant Professor, Floriculture, Department of Horticulture, Forestry and Recreation Resources.

Four o’Clock, *Mirabilis*
Firecracker Plant, *Cuphea*
Globe Amaranth, *Gomphrena*
Jacob’s Coat, *Amaranthus*
Madagascar Periwinkle, *Catharanthus*
Marigold, *Tagetes*
Mexican Sunflower, *Tithonia*
Ornamental Pepper, *Capsicum*
Petunia, *Petunia*
Rose Moss, *Portulaca*
Salvia, *Salvia farinacea*
Snow-on-the-Mountain, *Euphorbia*
Verbena, *Verbena*
Zinnia, *Zinnia*

Annuals for shade

Begonia, *Begonia*
Browallia, *Browallia*
Coleus, *Coleus*
Impatiens, *Impatiens*
Nicotiana, *Nicotiana*
Salvia, *Salvia splendens*
Pansy, *Viola*

Drought-tolerant annuals

Burning Bush, *Kochia*
Creeping Zinnia, *Sanvitalia*
Dusty Miller, *Senecio*
Four o’Clock, *Mirabilis*
Gazania, *Gazania*
Jacob’s Coat, *Amaranthus*
Madagascar Periwinkle, *Catharanthus*
Mexican Sunflower, *Tithonia*
Rose Moss, *Portulaca*
Salvia, *Salvia farinacea*
Snow-on-the-Mountain, *Euphorbia*
Sweet Alyssum, *Lobularia*

Annual for cut flowers

Annual Baby’s Breath, *Gypsophila*
Annual Phlox, *Phlox*
Bells of Ireland, *Molucella*
China Pink, *Dianthus*
Spiderflower, *Cleome*
Cockscomb, *Celosia*
Cornflower, *Centaurea*
Globe Amaranth, *Gomphrena*
Marigold, *Tagetes*
Mexican Sunflower, *Tithonia*
Nicotiana, *Nicotiana*
Petunia, *Petunia*
Salvia, *Salvia*
Strawflower, *Helichrysum*
Zinnia, *Zinnia*

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