

ANNUAL FLOWERS

Annuals are non-woody plants that complete their life cycle in one season. Most annuals can be damaged by frost, so be aware of the weather in the early spring and fall to protect these cold-sensitive plants. Annual flowers can be a prime source of color to accent and liven a home's landscape. Most annuals begin blooming within a month of being planted and continue until frost, giving a much longer bloom period than most perennials. Choose from a wide range of colors, sizes and varieties. It is possible to plant annuals in sun or shade. They are perfect for beds, borders, rock gardens, window boxes, hanging baskets or as temporary ground covers and fillers.

Soil Preparation

Prepare an annual bed by digging 8-12" deep and amend with compost, perlite or peat moss to enrich the soil. Rake the bed and smooth, while removing any stones, clods or old plant debris before planting. In addition, use *Myke Annual and Perennial* when planting your annuals to encourage stronger roots and faster establishment.

Landscaping with Annuals

Annuals require higher levels of maintenance and water. Plant annuals in accessible areas near water sources and plant with other plants with similar lighting and watering requirements. Annuals are most notable for the color they provide. Color themes using related colors such as red and orange, yellow and green, or blue and purple work well. Warm colors bring excitement and appear closer to the viewer. This makes the space appear smaller. Cool colors are also more relaxing and soothe viewers. Using one color in various shades is a popular and attractive theme. Using complimentary colors, those found on opposite sides of the color wheel, is also a pleasing effect. Plant height is another consideration. It is important to place annuals so that their ability to draw attention is not diluted. In containers, plant the taller plants in the back so all plants are visible, or plant the taller plants in the center when all sides of the container are visible.



Maintenance

Annual flowers normally require 1-1½" of water a week. Water in newly planted annuals with a mixture of Superthrive, a concentrated vitamin hormone that encourages fast development of fine feeder roots. Soaker hoses or drip irrigation are usually the best for watering annuals in the landscape. Avoid overhead watering, particularly in the evening. Watering in the morning can reduce foliage diseases.

Feeding: In order to get the most blooms and the longest blooming period, regular fertilizing is necessary. Granular and slow-release feed the plants over a longer period of time, only needing to reapply sparingly, which is a better for larger annual beds, in stead of water-soluble feedings that must be mixed and used often. Always follow label instruction as too much fertilizer will cause salts to build up injuring plant's roots.

Pinching: Pinching and deadheading (trimming spent flowers) can promote quicker bloom turnaround and reduce legginess. The plant's energy can go towards new blooms and shoots. Always prune any dead or damaged foliage.

Annuals In Containers

Planting annuals in containers will require regular fertilization during the growing season. Trailing plants can be pruned to keep the plants more compact. For more information on planting and care of container gardens, please see our Resource Guide on *Container Gardens*.