



Quite Simply. Amazing.

growing guide

ANNUALS: HOW TO GROW

As soon as the weather loses its wintery edge, thoughts turn to annual plants.

Most people are eager to get some color and life back into their yards. Annuals are a good solution for that. The first thing to keep in mind though, is that the last likely freeze date in our area is May 15th, so any planting done before then should focus on frost tolerant varieties or just expect that if there is a dip in the temperature, you may lose your plants.

Once the ground has warmed up, and the soil is workable, now's the time to spring for those annuals!

One of the smartest tasks is to get your soil ready. If you are planting in the ground, most beds would benefit from the addition of organic matter. This can include compost from a composting bin, Better Earth, or peat moss, to help to loosen soil and help its water retention. Work the organic material into the bed to a depth of about 2 – 4". If you are planting in a container, simply fill the container with a good quality potting soil.

Next, consider what annuals you want to plant. You can select by color, size, texture, height, fragrance, what will attract butterflies or varieties that you have been successful with before. You can break almost all the rules in selecting plants. Although books and magazines may offer specific plans or recipes, feel free to follow those, or venture off on your own.

The staff at Hoerr Nursery is happy to help you select annuals that meet your needs. Many new and exiting annuals are introduced each year, some focus on more drought tolerance, some on exotic colors, some on more disease resistance, etc.

A very important consideration that you really can't overlook is the light needs of the plant.

A plant that requires full sun will be a sad little desperate fellow if tucked in under a big showy shrub. Likewise a plant that thrives in the shade will literally look fried in the blast of summer sun. Anything more than a ½ a day of direct sunlight is considered full sun. If you are not sure, actually put an empty pot in your garden where you are considering placing the annuals. Check on it every hour or two – you can keep track of your results on a chart – and mark whether the sun is hitting it. Even though the sun will move through the sky during the season, this little technique will give you a good idea of

whether the plant is in full sun or not.

Additionally, early morning sun is not as hot as afternoon sun, so: a sun/shade plant can tolerate more morning sun than the hot, hot afternoon sun.

How do you learn the light needs of the annuals? Read the label. Each plant has a label with important information about the culture and needs of the plant. If you have any

questions, please ask a Hoerr Nursery staff person.

How many plants do you need? Generally a good rule for that is if you want your plantings very dense and full in a bed, plant them about 6 – 8" apart. (If you splay your fingers apart, that is approximately the space to allow between plants.)

If you want plants to dot along a border, you can allow greater width between them. In a container, you may want to "crowd" them a bit. You still need to allow for ventilation between plants and allow for robust growth. If you are using vigorous varieties like wave petunias, spread them out a bit more – and pay more attention to the recommended spacing. Again, please ask a Hoerr Nursery horticulturist for more advice on proper spacing, if you have questions.



Hoerr Nursery
8020 N. Shade Tree Dr.
Peoria, IL 61615
309/691-4561
FAX309/691-1834

How to arrange your garden

There are many strategies for arranging your annuals in your garden.

A good rule is to put shorter plants in front, taller in back. This information as to the expected height of the mature plant, as well as other important information specific to the plant, is generally found on the tag in the pot.

Or, you may be viewing the garden from a deck and prefer to clump flowers by color, or in order to always have something blooming and visible.

You may ask a Hoerr Nursery horticulturist to do a brief garden-plan sketch for you suggesting some ideas of arranging your annuals. Also, we generally have a Garden-Plan Sketch event in the early spring open to the public, which also provides ideas on garden plans. If you need help with ideas in planting your containers, we have "recipes" which have proven to be beautiful combinations in the Peoria area.

Or, we offer a service that we can plant your container for you and even deliver it to you (a delivery charge will apply).

Fertilizing and watering are important considerations for maintaining rigorous growth and showy flowers in your annuals. Most plants do not want wet feet, so pay attention to your annuals. When they are getting dry, water them.

On hot or windy summer days, especially for container plants, you may need to water at least every day. You may generally fertilize with a light concentration at each watering. Another good way to fertilize is to use Osmocote, a granular slow release fertilizer. Read package instructions and do not use a concentration stronger than recommended or you will burn the plants.

There are many exciting, new annuals on the market – and many long-time favorites too. Whatever your choice, annuals are a great way to instantly make your garden come alive.





Quite Simply. Amazing.

growing guide

ANNUALS: Chrysanthemum Facts

Chrysanthemums, also known as mums, garden mums, and cushion mums, are a very popular fall flower. In our planting zone, mums are typically annuals or short-lived perennials needing proper care and location to assure survival.

Annual or Perennial

Mums are technically perennials in milder climatic zones. We consider them to be annuals since generally they are not hardy in our zone, Zone 5.

Some varieties are hardier than others. "Florist mums" are rarely hardy in our area. Sometimes, it requires trial and error to discover which varieties work for you and in which area in your garden they do best. At Hoerr Nursery, please check the plant label or ask our experienced staff to help you select the mum that best meets your needs!

To improve the likelihood that your mums will survive the winter: do not trim off the spent flowers and foliage until spring; plant in good, well drained soil; and make sure they stay watered and healthy throughout the fall.

Location

An ideal way to use mums is to pop them into a basket or container and set on your patio or porch. They bring an immediate splash of color and generally maintain blooms for a fairly long period. Or, you can bring mums into the house and set on a saucer to create a focal point in the sometimes dreary days of fall.

If you plan to plant your mums, find a location in full sun, or in as much sun as possible. Plant in a well-drained, but moist soil. They do not like heavy clay soil. If you have heavy or clay soil, incorporate a lot of peat or compost before planting.

They do not like wet soil in winter. This is often the biggest reason for failure. Heavy soils are usually too wet over winter for mums to survive. Avoid locations with cold, drying winter winds.

Fertilizing

Mums are heavy feeders. Be sure to supplement with fertilizers such as Nursery Select Miracle-Gro or Osmocote. Fertilize

spring through the end of July. Do not fertilize after July.

Mulching

Apply a loose winter mulch after the ground freezes. Pine bark, pine straw, straw, or shredded bark can be effective, but don't pack it down.

Pruning

Do not cut down the plants until spring. Perennial expert Tracy DiSabato-Aust reports, "research in Germany and confirmed in trials at Iowa State University, has shown that leaving the plants with their stems and foliage for the winter greatly improves their over-wintering survival rate."

Pinching

Mums have the best flower display when pinched. University of Illinois recommends pinching May 15, June 15, and July 15, but no later. This creates bushy plants and assures nice flower display by fall.

Occasionally mums do flower in spring. If so, begin pinching after the spring flower. DiSabato-Aust suggests you may be able to pinch at the end of July to delay flowering into October. Do not pinch after the end of July. "Pinching or cutting back plants too late may reduce the floral display." Pinch just the very tip of each stem to create a bushy plant with numerous, smaller flowers.

For larger flowers, you can pinch off the side flower buds so there are fewer, or even single flowers, per stem. This is how most florists pinch their potted mums.

Dividing

Plants that over-winter annually are most vigorous when divided every year or two.

Because our climate makes mums difficult to over winter, they are not covered by our plant guarantee.

Varieties

We offer many varieties of mums. A few we have throughout the summer, but the vast majority are available from approximately late August through the fall.

Hoerr Nursery
8020 N. Shade Tree Dr.
Peoria, IL 61615
309/691-4561
FAX309/691-1834

