

Suburban Gardener

Annuals Brighten Garden From Now Until Frost

By BETTY FRANKEL
Special Writer

Annuals can make the garden! Not only can they be used to add a dash of long-lasting color to the perennial bed or shrub

border, but an entire garden can be created using only annuals. An advantage that annuals have over the perennial plants that live for many years is that the annuals have a long period of bloom. Most perennials bloom for a few short weeks, but petunias, marigolds and most annuals will bloom from now until killed by frost in fall.

There are two ways to plant annuals. The seeds can be sown in the garden bed, or little plants started indoors by the gardener or by a nursery or greenhouse can be transplanted.

The former method gives the most plants for the least amount of money, but does require patience. If an instant

garden is desired, the little plants purchased from a nursery are the answer.

THE FLATS AND PACKS of annuals look so colorful and appealing. They are all tempting, but it is a good idea to plan ahead, and to know what they will grow into. Buy the plants that will fit the growing conditions and space that you have.

Colors are easy to select - whatever pleases the gardener is right. If the combinations turn out to be not quite what was in mind, there's little need to fret, because next year a new assortment can be tried.

Most annuals need a sunny spot in which to grow. However, the few that will thrive in the shade are especially important for brightening dark corners in the garden or for growing on the north side of the house.

Among those that will endure considerable shade are impatiens, begonias, flowering tobacco, lobelia, stock, cockscomb, and torenia. Dwarf impatiens are especially useful and attractive. They form low spreading plants covered with white, pink, orange, rose or red flowers. They are bright and dependable.

AMONG THOSE that will grow in light shade are Chinese forget-me-nots, phlox drummondii, pansies, snapdragon, sweet alyssum and sweet sultan or centaurea.

There are some annuals that seem to grow best in hot, dry situations. These include calliopsis, cape marigold (Dimorphotheca), bachelor button, Phlox Drummondii, four-o'clock, ice plant, morning glory, larkspur, portulacca, sage, and zinnias.

Among those that will grow on very poor infertile soil are California poppies, nasturtiums, portulacca, cleome, sweet alyssum, and sweet sultan.

There are a few that tolerate acid soil and will grow in the beds prepared for azaleas and rhododendrons. Flowering tobacco and calliopsis will grow in acid in shady places and marigolds and verbena will grow in acid soil in sunny places.

ANNUALS COME in all sizes and forms. There are even some that can be grown as a substitute for a shrub.

Castor beans grow quickly into plants as tall as a man with lush tropical-looking foliage. They make attractive background plants or screens. A word of caution, though. The red flowers they produce are followed by seeds that are poisonous. This need not be a hazard, though, because the flowers can be removed to prevent seed formation.

Don't Overdo It. A common mistake when adding fertilizer to beds, or rows is to think that if a little does good, a lot will do more good. Not so.

Just as it doesn't do you any good to overeat, so it hurts rather than helps plants when you overfertilize.

A sprinkle on the ground, so that it looks as if light snow had fallen, is the usual direction given for applying fertilizer in most plants.

Another annual "shrub" is Koebe, also known as summer cypress. It makes plants that resemble small fine-textured evergreens.

Among the annual vines are scarlet runner bean, which will grow in poor soil, morning glory, moonflower, and hyacinth bean. They can add height and bring interest and charm to the garden.

The mainstays, of course, are the petunias, marigolds, zinnias and other annuals that can be massed to fill a flower bed and create a melange of color that is bright and gay all season.

Effective displays can be worked out using numerous varieties of a single kind of flower. For instance tall marigolds or zinnias can be used as a background with medium sized kinds of the same flower in the middle areas of the bed and with dwarf varieties for a low edging in front.

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