# *Gaillardias Bloom All Summer Long*

Gaillardias are known for the profusion of flowers they produce and for the length of time over which they continue to bloom. "All summer long" is not an idle phrase when applied to these plants.

There are both annual and perennial gaillardias, both equally easy to grow from seeds sown where the plants are to bloom.

**Gaillardias prefer light, open soil and must have both sunlight and air. With these conditions met, they'll provide you with a constant show of blossoms for cutting or to make your garden gay.**

Single-flowered gaillardias have just one row of petals but double ones are rounded heads filled with petals and are generally more popular with gardeners.

While gaillardia flowers normally are 2½ to three inches across, those of some tetraploid varieties are four inches in diameter.

Flower colors are various shades of yellow to orange and a series of off-reds: brick, claret and "smoky." They combine well with most other flower colors -- another point in their favor.

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# 2 Diseases Plague Michigan Lawns

EAST LANSING

Rings of dead grass and lawn areas speckled with white powdery material are indications of two lawn diseases that plagued Michigan lawns last year.

The circles of dead grass, usually ranging in size from six to 18 inches, are probably caused by fusarium blight, a fungus disease that can take a heavy toll of shaded bluegrass lawns.

**The areas that look like they have been sprinkled with flour or lime or some other white powdery substance are suffering from powdery mildew. It usually occurs in damp, shaded, bluegrass lawns. Merion bluegrass is the most susceptible.**

"There is no chemical guaranteed to control fusarium blight," says David Martin, Michigan State University turfgrass specialist. "Chemical control of powdery mildew is impractical because it requires applications every seven to 10 days. But home owners can correct both problems with proper management techniques."

Severe cases of fusarium blight will require resodding or reseeding between Aug. 15 to Sept. 1 in southern Michigan and Aug. 10 to Aug. 25 in northern Michigan. Less severe cases -- where dead areas are only about the size of your hand -- will recover when the grass begins to revive again under good growing conditions.

"FUSARIUM blight can usually be minimized by not allowing the lawn to be under stress," explains Martin. "In other words, the lawn should be adequately watered and fertilized with nitrogen.

**"At this time of the year, you should put on water insoluble forms of nitrogen. During early September and the spring months, any form of nitrogen will help the lawn to thrive and resist blight."**

Powdery mildew can cause extensive thinning of bluegrass, particularly Merion. If it has been heavily thinned, Martin recommends reseeding the area with Pennlawn red fescue in late August. This can be done by vigorously raking the area, loosening the soil, removing the dead grass, seeding and firming the seed into the soil.

"Red fescue is not susceptible to the disease and will provide a long term prevention of the disease," comments Martin. "The mixture of fescue and bluegrass will give you a nice looking lawn that is much more disease resistant."

# Your House Plants Need An Outdoor Vacation

One of the best things you can do for your house plants is get them out of the house for the summer.

J. Lee Taylor, horticulture specialist with the Cooperative Extension Service at Michigan State University, says that almost all house plants will thrive outside in the summer. Just remember to put them in the shade, he cautions.

And, as added incentive, Taylor emphasizes the easy care of outdoor-house plants.

If you have plants in clay pots, Taylor recommends that you bury the whole pot in the soil. Then in the fall you can dig the pot out, clean it off and take it right back into the house. If you take the plant out of the pot, you'll probably have more root growth than will fit the same pot in the fall. That means you'll have to do some root trimming before repotting.

Taylor recommends moving house plants outside after Memorial Day and bringing them back indoors around Labor Day. "House plants can't stand a threat of frost," he says.

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THE ONLY OTHER threat to house plants in the out-of-doors is water. If you choose not to bury the pot, be sure to water the plant often. Most house plants have a great amount of leaf in proportion to the root system, Taylor explains. This means they use a lot of water.

Taylor recommends the outdoor vacation for everything from cactus to begonias and philodendron. The notable exception is African violets. But any real African violet fan probably already has an efficient indoor setup, he adds.

"In some cases, like philodendron, it's just as wise to throw the whole plant out, and start fresh in the fall," Taylor comments. "You can get that sort of plant for 29 or 39 cents, which hardly makes it worth the fuss of moving the plant back inside."

## FIX-IT TIP

To make a ceiling appear lower, paint it a bright color. This will make the room seem warmer and cozier. If you wish to make the ceiling seem higher, paint it a pale or cool color.

# Flower-Filled Walls Add To Patio Beauty

Even the smallest city patio can become a summer vacation land if generously decorated with potted plants and flowers.

As land vanishes and the populations of our cities increases, lucky is the citizen who can create such a retreat.

A tiny planted courtyard, hidden away behind walls, becomes a place of needed natural beauty and an extension of living space.

Perhaps all you have is a small square, a mere scrap of space.

Count your blessings, and begin its transformation! With careful planning and at minimum cost, a drab, forgotten corner can become your city oasis.

Privacy, it has been said, will be the most prized possession of the 21st century. But isn't the need full upon us now?

The first joy of any city patio is its quiet and seclusion.

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IF YOU HAVE no walls you can create them with a little carpentry to accommodate boxes and hanging baskets of colorful flowers.

The flower-filled walls leave precious ground space for potted green plants in your miniature patio garden.

Visualize a grouping of five long plant boxes neatly attached, one above the other, to a trellised framework, or directly on your wall. Each box is bursting with brilliant, cascading flowers.

ANY PLACE you can imagine, and some you can't, is a place for a flower box. Consider this one atop two electric light meters! It's filled with geraniums and variegated vinca.

In the highest box are red trailing geraniums, in the next white petunias, in the third—just below eye-level—blue ageratum. In the fourth, red petunias, and closest to the ground a bright mass of pink wax begonias.

The cost of these flowers at the florist shop, incidentally, is no more than the price of a family evening out on the town.

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THE SOCIETY of American Florists points out that box construction for wall flowers must be strong.

If made of redwood or rot-proofed pine and provided with drain holes, they will last for at least five to six years.

When you choose your potted plants, give silent thanks to the ancient Greeks.

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