

10 Most Colorful, Carefree Annuals Listed

Annual flowers that bloom the same year from seed planted in the spring offer the quickest and most vibrant color. Some can be planted right where you want them to bloom for rich displays of color all summer.

America's hot summers are tough on some varieties of annuals and tailor-made for others.

So, with this important consideration in mind, here's a selection of 10 most colorful and carefree annuals.

ZINNIAS. Showiest of all are the giant cactus-flowered types with individual blooms measuring up to six inches across in a range of dramatic colors unmatched by any other class of annual flowers.

The giant dahlg-flowered kinds are also spectacular.

Plant the seed right where you want the flowers to bloom. A mixed bed is gorgeous, but separate colors are particularly the brilliant orange, yellow and red types — are stunning by themselves. Plant in full sun after danger of frost, and you'll have blooms by July.

Keep the dead flowers picked off, and the plants will continue blooming right into fall.

One of the most remarkable new breeding achievements among zinnias are the new Peter Pan class, with large flowers on dwarf plants that stay neat and compact all season. Peter Pan Pink, Plum and Scarlet all won high awards in the All-America Selections.

MARIGOLDS. The dwarf French marigolds are ideal for edgings, rock gardens and low beds, and the larger-flowered American marigolds will create a beautiful tall border, or "hedge" effect.

The dwarf French marigolds are quick to bloom, some of them within eight to ten weeks of planting the seed.

Among the larger-flowered marigolds, the semi-dwarf hybrids are great. They stay low-growing, but produce big rounded flowers in shades of yellow and orange, blooming profusely from mid-July.

For earlier flowers, start seeds indoors and set good-size plants into your garden where they will receive good sun.

PETUNIAS. A packet of petunia seeds will grow hundreds of plants, and it's in a massed bed that petunias really look their best.



The Green Thumb
By GEORGE ABRAHAM

Every year about this time we get letters, mainly from school children, asking us why do birds fly in formation?

Since birds are part of life of everyone who grows plants, we are happy to try and explain why birds fly in V-formation.

There are many theories but the one I like best comes from two specialists in aerodynamics from the California Institute of Technology. They say the V-formation flying of big migratory birds, like the Canada geese, is a help-each-other act.

Their studies show each bird in flight sets off a strong updraft from its wings. The following bird flies in a position which gives him maximum help from his boss.

If a bird gets ahead of lags behind it immediately senses the difference and moves back into line. The researches say this formation flying increases the birds' range by as much as 70 per cent.

And while whales have little to do with gardening, did you know that whales actually sing? Dr. R.S. Payne, a research scientist at Rockefeller University, has recorded the "song" of the nearby extinct humpback whale. Those who have heard it say it is "strangely melodious" and has a "peculiar beauty."

Getting back to gardening, would you like a dandy bulletin on shrubs which attract birds near your home? Send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope and ask for a copy of our guide, "Berried Treasures". It lists some excellent shrubs you can plant this spring, and which you should be thinking about right now.

GROW SOME HERBS: Now that the seed catalogs are in, why not order some good herbs or seed to start an herb garden?

You can even have an indoor herb garden, and cut a pinch of herbs as is needed.

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: "I have a bird of paradise (Strelitzia) and it has plucked itself three or four inches above the pot rim. Should I divide the plant and repot it?"

Answer: Dividing it would delay flowering. Repot in a larger tub or planter. Replant in a well-drained container, using sterile potting medium and leafmold. Water well in summer while growth is active, but keep barely moist in winter.

Outdoor Rooms Expand House

With the average owner-occupied home in the U.S. valued at \$19,574 and rising, according to the last census, America's families still can't afford to build the kind of big, rambling house that was traditional a generation or two ago — the house with room for every family activity.

The solution, claim the American Association of Nurserymen, is to expand the home to create outdoor rooms, extending to the property line.

Outside rooms can include a party room (the patio or terrace), a place to play (the recreational area), a quiet place (the outdoor equivalent of the study), an exterior foyer (a place that says "welcome"),

Walls and room dividers in these outside areas are created with trees and shrubs and plants and patches of lawn, bringing a natural environment into the everyday family life.

Start seed early so you have good size plants to transfer into your garden after danger of frost. They will thrive in full sun or a little shade, with the whites and reds making a magnificent display when grown in contrast.

Blue, pink and yellow are also popular petunia colors, with the giant grandiflora types as the most popular among home gardeners.

Grow them as a border or as an edging along paths. They're terrific also as a container or window box planter, or combined with reds in a hanging basket, blooming from early summer until frost.

CELOSIA. These old-fashioned flowers come in two kinds — the crested and the plumed; Both types grow superbly in America's hot summer climate.

Mammoth Russian is the largest-flowered of all, and the kind that people prize with in giant-sunflower contests. The seed heads produce large stiped, meaty seeds good for people and birds to eat.

Other kinds of sunflowers are bushy and low growing, but all kinds love sun and resist drought.

Both kinds of celosia are very easy to grow, either started indoors to produce healthy young plants for transplanting outside, or direct-sowing into the garden after danger of frost.

SUNFLOWERS. The giant sunflowers are beautiful to use as tall backgrounds. They grow incredibly fast. From seed direct-sown into the garden. The seed is very easy to handle, providing a source of fascination for children.

looks best as a background planting to giant zinnias. A single-flowered newcomer has golden yellow petals and a bright green center instead of the more usual brown.

Plant in full sun for best results.

IMPATIENS. These are shade-loving plants, and a big improvement has been made in them through modern breeding techniques, especially in creating dwarf varieties to use as low borders and edgings.

White, orange, red, pink and orchid are the favorite colors, and it's best to start seed early for transplanting outdoors in a shady position after danger of frost.

PORTULACA. This is a favorite edging and border plant that loves full sun, grows well in poor soil, and resists drought.

It's a delightful plant to

grow in rock gardens and window boxes where it seems to take care of itself.

Direct sown into the garden after danger of frost, the seeds grow fast and soon produce their perky flowers in bright colors ranging from white and yellow to rose pink and red.

COLEUS. This is not really a flower, since it is grown mainly for its colorful foliage, predominating in fall colors of lime green, yellow, red and orange, and in many combinations of these colors.

Coleus does well in light shade, and makes a fine edging or bedding plant.

Seed is best started indoors to get good size plants for transplanting into the garden after all danger of frost.

In fall, sprigs of coleus can be suspended in water to form roots, and these cuttings can be potted-up to produce

beautiful house plants during the winter months.

MORNING GLORIES. There are many plants around the home and garden where a quick-growing, colorful vine is needed as a screen, or for decoration, and the many kinds of morning glories meet these needs admirably.

Blue is the most widely grown color, and the sky-blue flowers are a delightful sight when grown in full sun.

Other colors are rapidly gaining in popularity, and these include white, scarlet, and rose-pink varieties.

Morning glories have hard seed coats, but the seeds are easy to handle. To ensure quickest germination, it is best to chip the seed coat with a knife so moisture can penetrate more readily to begin the germination process.

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GLORIOSA DAISIES. Strictly speaking, these are perennials. But if seed is started early, they will bloom the first year. The seed is so hardy it can be sown on top of snow; or before the ground has warmed up.

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Other colors are rapidly gaining in popularity, and these include white, scarlet, and rose-pink varieties.

Morning glories have hard seed coats, but the seeds are easy to handle. To ensure quickest germination, it is best to chip the seed coat with a knife so moisture can penetrate more readily to begin the germination process.

sum m e r c l i m a t e . predominating in rich reds and yellows.

The largest-flowered of the combed (crested) varieties has individual heads measuring 10 inches across, whereas one of the showiest of the plumed varieties has rich red plumes and red foliage, creating a magnificent contrast against a green lawn.

Both kinds of celosia are very easy to grow, either started indoors to produce healthy young plants for transplanting outside, or direct-sowing into the garden after danger of frost.

GLORIOSA DAISIES. Strictly speaking, these are perennials. But if seed is started early, they will bloom the first year. The seed is so hardy it can be sown on top of snow; or before the ground has warmed up.

The best method, however, is to start seeds indoors and have six inch plants for transplanting into the garden at normal planting time.

The yellow double-flowered variety is magnificent, and

looks best as a background planting to giant zinnias. A single-flowered newcomer has golden yellow petals and a bright green center instead of the more usual brown.

Plant in full sun for best results.

IMPATIENS. These are shade-loving plants, and a big improvement has been made in them through modern breeding techniques, especially in creating dwarf varieties to use as low borders and edgings.

White, orange, red, pink and orchid are the favorite colors, and it's best to start seed early for transplanting outdoors in a shady position after danger of frost.

PORTULACA. This is a favorite edging and border plant that loves full sun, grows well in poor soil, and resists drought.

It's a delightful plant to

grow in rock gardens and window boxes where it seems to take care of itself.

Direct sown into the garden after danger of frost, the seeds grow fast and soon produce their perky flowers in bright colors ranging from white and yellow to rose pink and red.

COLEUS. This is not really a flower, since it is grown mainly for its colorful foliage, predominating in fall colors of lime green, yellow, red and orange, and in many combinations of these colors.

Coleus does well in light shade, and makes a fine edging or bedding plant.

Seed is best started indoors to get good size plants for transplanting into the garden after all danger of frost.

In fall, sprigs of coleus can be suspended in water to form roots, and these cuttings can be potted-up to produce

beautiful house plants during the winter months.

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