



# Annual Flowers for Specific Uses in Oklahoma

An OBGA Series Fact Sheet

**Michael A. Schnelle**

Assistant Professor  
Extension Ornamentals/Floriculture Specialist

**John M. Dole**

Assistant Professor, Floriculture

**Douglas C Needham**

Assistant Professor, Floriculture

An annual is any plant that completes its life cycle in one growing season. Many of the plants listed in this fact sheet are not true annuals, but are normally treated as such for Oklahoma conditions. Some of these, however, will overwinter most seasons if mulched or grown near a foundation of a house.

## Cut Flowers

Below are a few of the more commonly grown species for use in bouquets and arrangements that are equally attractive in the flower garden. See Extension Facts No. 6407 for ideas on flower arrangements and bouquets.

African daisy (*Dimorphotheca sinuata*)  
Baby's-breath (*Gypsophila elegans*)  
Bells of Ireland (*Molucella laevis*)  
Celosia [*Celosia cristata* (*Plumosa* Group)]  
Cleome (*Cleome hasslerana*)  
Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*)  
Cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus* and *C. sulphureus*)  
Fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*)  
Gerbera daisy (*Gerbera jamesonii*)  
Globe amaranth (*Gomphrena globosa*)  
Marigold, African (*Tagetes erecta*)  
Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)  
Pincushion flower (*Scabiosa atropurpurea*)  
Salvia (*Salvia splendens*)  
Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*)  
Statice, Florist's (*Limonium sinuatum*)  
Strawflower (*Helichrysum bracteatum*)  
Sunflower, Mexican (*Tithonia rotundifolia*)  
Tobacco, flowering (*Nicotiana glauca*)  
Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*)

## Showy Foliage

These plants may be used to lend interest to surrounding flowering plants or for foliage in bouquets. Many of these species are equally striking when planted alone.

Amaranthus (*Amaranthus tricolor*)  
Asparagus fern (*Asparagus plumosus*)

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Fact Sheets  
are also available on our website at:  
<http://osufacts.okstate.edu>

Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) many cultivars  
Cabbage, ornamental [*Brassica oleracea* (*Capitata* Group)]  
Castor bean (*Ricinus communis*)  
Coleus (*Coleus x hybridus*)  
Copperleaf (*Acalypha wilkesiana*)  
Dusty miller (*Senecio cineraria*)  
Joseph's-Coat (*Alternanthera ficoidea*)  
Kale, ornamental [*Brassica oleracea* (*Acephala* Group)]  
Kochia (*Kochia scoparia* f. *trichophylla*)  
Maple, flowering (*Abutilon* sp.)  
New Guinea Impatiens (*Impatiens hawkeri*)  
Polka dot plant (*Hypoestes phyllostachya*)  
Snow-on-the-mountain (*Euphorbia marginata*)

## Large Background

Tall plants help to serve as a background to shorter annuals in the foreground of beds. Also, consider these quick-growing species as barriers to hide unsightly areas.

Amaranthus (*Amaranthus tricolor*)  
Candle plant (*Cassia alata*)  
Castor bean (*Ricinus communis*)  
Cosmos (*Cosmos sulphureus* and *C. bipinnatus*)  
Fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*)  
Four o'Clock (*Mirabilis jalapa*)  
Marigold, African (*Tagetes erecta*)  
Mexican zinnia (*Tithonia rotundifolia*)  
Spider flower (*Cleome hasslerana*)  
Summer cypress (*Kochia scoparia* f. *trichophylla*)  
Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)  
Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*)

## Prefer or Tolerate Light Shade

These plants need protection from the sun. Many of these will suffer without protection from harsh Oklahoma conditions.

Alyssum, sweet (*Lobularia maritima*)  
Black-eyed Susan vine (*Thunbergia alata*)  
Browallia (*Browallia speciosa*)  
Fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*)  
Impatiens (*Impatiens wallerana*)  
Impatiens, New Guinea (*Impatiens hawkeri*)

# Annual Flowers for



Figure 1. *Nierembergia hippomanica* var. *violacea*. Cup flower.



Figure 2. *Catharanthus roseus*. Periwinkle.



Figure 3. *Lobularia maritima*. Sweet alyssum.

No other group of plants is as diverse and colorful as bedding plants or annuals.



Figure 4. *Nicotiana glauca*. Flowering tobacco.



Figure 5. *Celosia cristata*. Cockscomb.



Figure 6. *Gerbera jamesonii*. Gerbera daisy.



Figure 7. *Portulaca grandiflora*. Rose moss.



Figure 8. *Verbena x hybrida*. Garden verbena.



Figure 9. *Brassica oleracea* (Capitata group). Ornamental cabbage.

# Specific Uses in Oklahoma



Figure 10. *Dyssodia tenuiloba*. Dahlberg daisy.



Figure 11. *Tithonia rotundifolia*. Mexican sunflower.



Figure 12. *Viola x wittrockiana*. Pansy.



Figure 13. *Abelmoschus moschatus*. Abelmoschus.



Figure 14. *Sanvitalia procumbens*. Creeping zinnia.



Figure 15. *Zinnia elegans*. Zinnia.



Figure 16. *Antirrhinum majus*. Snapdragon.



Figure 17. *Pelargonium x hortorum*. Geranium.

Annuals allow gardeners the means to experiment with relatively inexpensive plants on a seasonal basis.

Garden balsam (*Impatiens balsamina*)  
 Lobelia (*Lobelia erinus*)  
 Nierembergia (*Nierembergia hippomanica* var.  
*violacea*)  
 Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)  
 Pansy (*Viola x wittrockiana*)  
 Periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*)  
 Petunia (*Petunia x hybrida*)  
 Phlox, annual (*Phlox drummondii*)  
 Stock (*Matthiola incana* 'Annu')  
 Wax begonia (*Begonia semperflorens-cultorum*)  
 Wishbone flower (*Torenia fournieri*)

## Edging/Borders/Containers

Plants listed below are relatively short, and thus are useful in foregrounds of beds, containers, and French baskets. Be certain you buy cultivars which do not grow tall. Some of these species are quite variable for their mature heights.

African daisy (*Dimorphotheca sinuata*)  
 Joseph's Coat (*Alternanthera ficoidea* 'Betzickiana')  
 Alyssum, sweet (*Lobularia maritima*)  
 Annual hibiscus (*Abelmoschus moschatus*)  
 California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)  
 Celosia [*Celosia cristata* (*Plumosa* Group)]  
 Cockscomb (*Celosia cristata*)  
 Cuphae (*Cuphea platycentra*)  
 Dahlberg daisy (*Dyssodia tenuiloba*)  
 Dahlia, dwarf hybrids (*Dahlia* hybrids)  
 Dusty miller (*Senecio cineraria*)  
 Flossflower (*Ageratum houstonianum*)  
 Garden balsam (*Impatiens balsamina*)  
 Gazania (*Gazania rigens*)  
 Geranium (*Pelargonium x hortorum*)  
 Globe amaranth, dwarf (*Gomphrena globosa*)  
 Ivy geranium (*Pelargonium peltatum*)  
 Lantana (*Lantana* hybrids)  
 Lobelia (*Lobelia erinus*)  
 Marigold, dwarf (*Tagetes patula*)  
 Melampodium (*Melampodium paludosum*)  
 Nierembergia (*Nierembergia hippomanica* var.  
*violacea*)  
 Pepper, ornamental (*Capsicum annuum*)  
 Periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*)  
 Petunia (*Petunia x hybrida*)  
 Phlox, annual (*Phlox drummondii*)  
 Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*)  
 Rose moss (*Portulaca grandiflora*)  
 Salvia (*Salvia splendens*)  
 Snapdragon, dwarf (*Antirrhinum majus*)  
 Tobacco, flowering (*Nicotiana glauca*)  
 Verbena (*Verbena x hybrida*)  
 Wishbone flower (*Torenia fournieri*)  
 Zinnia, dwarf types (*Zinnia elegans*)  
 Zinnia, trailing (*Sanvitalia procumbens*)

## Vines

The species below can be used for screening and can be grown on trellises, fences, and gazebos.

Black-eyed Susan vine (*Thunbergia alata*)  
 Cup-and-saucer vine (*Cobaea scandens*)  
 Moon flower (*Calonyction aculeatum*)  
 Morning glory (*Ipomoea purpurea*)  
 Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)  
 Scarlet runner bean (*Phaseolus coccineus*)

## Cold Tolerant Annuals

These plants allow for an extended display long into the fall and early spring.

Cabbage, ornamental [*Brassica oleracea* (*Capitata* Group)]  
 Dusty Miller (*Senecio cineraria*)  
 Kale, ornamental [*Brassica oleracea* (*Acephala* Group)]  
 Pansy (*Viola x wittrockiana*)  
 Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*)

## Dried Flowers/Fruit

The flowers below will dry readily for use in "everlasting" arrangements. Many other annuals can be dried with added effort and materials.

Ammobium (*Alatum grandiflorum*)  
 Bells of Ireland (*Molucella laevis*)  
 Chinese lantern (*Physalis franchetti*)  
 Cockscomb (*Celosia cristata*)  
 Globe amaranth (*Gomphrena globosa*)  
 Baby's breath (*Gypsophila elegans*)  
 Fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*)  
 Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*)  
 Statice, Florist's (*Limonium sinuatum*)  
 Strawflower (*Helichrysum bracteatum*)

The categories listed are merely suggestions for placement of annuals. These categories are by no means comprehensive, but rather common uses for the specific plants that are listed.

Annuals allow gardeners the means to experiment with relatively inexpensive plants on a seasonal basis. When new designs are desired, simply plan these changes for the next growing season. No other group of plants is as diverse and colorful as bedding plants or annuals. Check with personnel in your local greenhouse or garden center for additional advice on what performs well in your area.

Oklahoma State University, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robert E. Whitson, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President, Dean, and Director of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of 42 cents per copy. 0504