

The Scoop

on horticulture



All About Annuals

Color is an important part of landscaping and captures attention more than any other element in the landscape. This single aspect of design is especially important to consider when dealing with seasonal changes like annuals. Before designing an annual display, it is important to understand how colors relate to each other.

This edition of “The Scoop” focuses on this all-important factor, as well as design patterns, proper planting techniques and the annual plants to use according to the season.

COLOR 101

The color wheel includes three **primary colors** -- red, blue, and yellow. They are called primary because they cannot be created by combining other colors. Between the primary colors on the wheel are secondary colors, which are formed by mixing two primaries:

- orange = red + yellow
- green = yellow + blue
- violet = blue + red



Going one step further there are **tertiary colors**, such as blue-green and yellow-orange, between the primary and secondary colors. Additionally, there is an infinite spectrum of colors between

those. Typically there are more of these types of colors than the “pure” primary and secondary colors used in the landscape. **Neutral colors** include white, grays and silvers.

COLOR THEORY

Understanding the basics of color theory can help explain why some combinations work well together and why some do not. A simple way to achieve unity within a landscape design is to match warm colors to warm colors (red, yellow, and orange) and cool colors to cool colors (blue, purple and green). When selecting colors for a design, it is important to consider the following:

Warm Colors

- When viewed from a distance, these colors appear closer
- Will make a space seem smaller
- Good for dramatic displays

Cool Colors

- When viewed from a distance, these colors appear farther away
- If planted at rear of the flowerbed, it will make the bed seem larger
- Good for close-up viewing
- Can be easily overwhelmed by warm colors

There are several design schemes to choose from when laying out an annual display. One may opt for a **monochromatic** design, which uses various tints and shades of one color. Another option would be an **analogous** design, which uses colors that are closely related to one another on the color wheel. **Complementary** colors are colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel. Or select a **polychromatic** design, using a mixture of all colors.

Common Color Schemes



Monochromatic

The use of flowers with various tints and shades of one color.



Analogous

The use of flowers in colors that are closely related to one another on the color wheel.



Complementary Colors

The combination of flower colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel (shown here with purple & yellow).



Polychromatic

A mixture of all colors.

What, Where, and When?

Fall



Begonias - white, pink or red; Can be used in any combination or in patterns of a mix, stripes or border with another color behind. Great plant with little maintenance.



Dianthus - white, pink, crimson, rose or purple; Can be used as solids or a mix; will tolerate heat and cold but requires deadheading halfway through rotation.



Marigolds - red, yellow or orange; Requires deadheading to continually bloom; can be planted by themselves or are great in front of Salvia.



Salvia - red, white, purple, burgundy, salmon, lilac and Victoria blue; requires deadheading; can be used alone or as a backdrop to a shorter plant (i.e. Alyssum or Marigolds).



Begonias, Marigolds, Salvia, and Snapdragon – See Above



Pansies – Every color except true red available, including specialty mixes with similar hues (pinks, blues, etc.); this is the best option for winter unless deer are present.



Viola - Related to the pansy but has smaller, more abundant blooms, has also proven to do better in warm winter conditions and recover quicker from winter rain than pansies.



Phlox – red, white or blue; extremely cold hardy but will tolerate warm conditions; more of a wild growth habitat. Needs to be contracted - this is not grown on spec.

Impatiens - red, pink, orange, white lilac and many other colors! Depending upon variety and location can be used almost all year.



Snapdragon - white, yellow, burgundy, red, pink, orange or bronze; good to use at the back of a bed as a floral border.



Zinnia - yellow, orange, white, red, rose, pink, purple or lilac; needs full sun; many different varieties.



New Look Pentas - pink, red, white or lavender; star-cluster flowers; can grow 12-36 inches. Will fungus with too much water.



Winter

Spring

Begonias, Marigolds, and Salvia– See Above

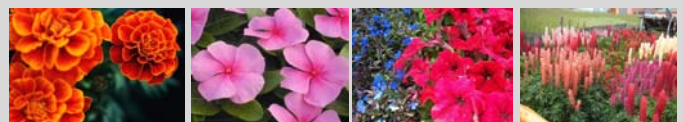


Celosia – red, yellow, orange or pink; similar to Salvia with upright plumes on top of foliage.



Important Note:

Spring and fall rotations should be planned together since both seasons have a similar plant selection.



PROPER ANNUAL PLANTING TECHNIQUES

First and foremost, the specific property must be evaluated. Determine the answers to the following questions, which will help you in selecting the proper annuals for the property:

- Sun vs. shade?
- Wet vs. dry?
- Close to the coast?
- Tall or short?
- Wildflower or manicured?

Once that is established, select and order annuals approximately three months before scheduled installation. The following 11 steps should help you through the installation process:



Design Example – Saw blade design with warm colors and varying heights.



Step 1 – Properly Remove Existing Annuals



Step 2 – Clear Remaining Debris



Step 3 – Clean the Edge/Border



Step 4 – Add Soil



Step 5 – Mix the Soil into Existing Site



Step 6 – Level the Soil

Step 7 – Apply Fertilizer and Soil Amendments

Step 8 – Draw Design in Soil

Step 9 – Plant Annuals

ALWAYS start at the front of the bed and work back. Use even spacing and straight lines.

Step 10 – Clean Up and Blow the Area

Step 11 – Irrigate the Bed

Irrigate up to 4 times in the summer, 2-3 times in the spring and fall, and 1-2 times in the winter. ALWAYS water in the morning (never after 10 am). Water for 20-30 minutes. One heavy watering is much better than multiple light waterings for root development.



Design Example – Sunburst design with warm colors and varying heights (orange and yellow Marigolds & red Salvia)

PESTS AND DISEASES

To maintain healthy and attractive annuals, it is essential to identify potential pest and disease problems and initiate the appropriate control measures.

The best method of reducing insect and/or disease problems is to keep the plants growing vigorously and free from stress. To help reduce the potential for insect and disease problems, it important to remember to following:

1. Select location carefully. The area should provide desirable growing conditions for the particular annual(s) planted. Also, avoid planting in corners where light intensity and air circulation are minimal.
2. Follow a regular fertilization and irrigation schedule to keep plants healthy.
3. Remove spent flowers from plants such as marigold, salvia, snapdragon, and geraniums, which do not naturally fall from the plant.
4. Keep foliage dry as much as possible and provide good air circulation (by spacing plants appropriately) to prevent fungal spores from germinating.
5. Remove weeds from flower beds as they are frequently host to insects and/or disease organisms. Avoid frequent wilting as water-stressed plants are more susceptible to infestation by thrips and red spider mites.

Annuals should be monitored frequently for insects and diseases. Infestations detected in the early stages can be controlled before the entire flower bed is infested. An insect infestation on a few plants can be controlled by picking insects off by hand or in the case of disease, by removing infected leaves. For severe infestations, chemical control will be needed.

REFERENCES

Black, R.J. and Tjia, B. 2000. "Annual Flowers for Florida." Retrieved on September 24, 2009. Available: University of Florida IFAS Extension <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>

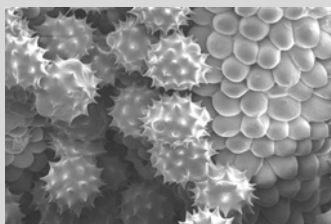
Questions, comments or topic ideas?
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Thrip



Red Spider Mite



Fungal Spores
(under electron microscope)

Fun Facts: Flower Symbolism

Symbolic meanings have been attributed to flowers since the beginning of time. It has been said that roses first turned red as they blushed with shame at Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Laurel wreaths placed around the heads of early Greek Olympians symbolized victory and glory. And in Ancient Egypt, Cleopatra scattered roses at Marc Anthony's feet as a symbol of her love.

Here's a closer look at the symbolic meaning of several plant varieties outlined in this edition of "The Scoop":



"Earth laughs in flowers."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Marigold	→	Comforts the heart
Salvia, blue	→	I think of you
Snapdragon	→	Gracious lady
Phlox	→	Our souls are united. Means flame in Latin.
Pansy	→	Thoughtful recollection
Impatiens	→	Motherly love
Zinnia	→	Thought of absent friends
Zinnia, pink	→	Lasting affection
Zinnia, red	→	Constancy
Zinnia, white	→	Goodness
Zinnia, yellow	→	Daily remembrance