

REGA Gardening Fact Sheet #5: *Annual Flowers* for Containers, Hanging Baskets & Trellises

Gardening enhances our personal and community space. All plants, from trees to flowers, beautify our living area, provide edible food and offer environmental benefits ranging from the oxygen we breathe to creating summer shade to cool our homes. By growing plants, we better appreciate our natural environment and the ecological relationships between soil, water and climate. Gardening helps the young to the young-at-heart understand the responsible use and protection of our natural environment, as well as the impact we have on the “big picture” of environmental stewardship.

With support from the Conexus Credit Union’s (CCU) Community Investment Program, the Regina Garden Associates (RGA) at the Regina Floral Conservatory aim to promote environmental stewardship through a series of gardening fact sheets, teaching appreciation of growing plants and basic gardening practices to the general public. Visit the Regina Floral Conservatory often and continue learning about gardening through our fact sheets.

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Annuals

Annuals, also referred to as bedding plants, have a life of one growing season from spring germination, flowering, seed production and death from frost and winter. For Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada the growing season comprises on average 111-frost free days typically from May 21 to September 10. Plants that comprise annuals are actually a combination of annuals, biennials or perennials which are not hardy to overwinter. Annuals range from flowering herbaceous plants to grasses and woody deciduous plants. Annuals may be grown from seed or purchased as potted plants from Garden Centres.

This Garden Fact Sheet addresses the use of annuals for containers, hanging baskets and trellises. These uses continue to increase in popularity, particularly where outdoor space is limited and attention is focused on bringing garden flowers to decks, patios, walkways and home entrances. Annuals offer colorful abundant flowers through much of the growing season. Cultivar or cultivated plant types for a given species are continually being introduced for new foliage and flower colour. These choices, plus the flexibility to move container and basket locations, create opportunity for new designs year after year. Since containers and hanging baskets are portable for moving inside or under cover, they can be planted earlier in the growing season when frost may still occur.

Gardening Tips for Containers, Hanging Baskets and Trellises

Larger containers and baskets are preferred for more growing space for plants. Options range from clay (terracotta), plastic, metal, stone/concrete, fiberglass, wood or a moss basket in a wire frame. Colour and type of container/basket can match the theme for your planting design. Have drain holes present in the container/basket bottom. Ensure drainage by placing a layer of stones (for example) in the base of the container or basket. Use a commercial potting soil comprising peat moss, humus, vermiculite and perlite. This will ensure better soil aeration and access of plant roots to moisture and nutrients. To increase drainage, raise the container from the deck or patio surface. Containers, and in particular, hanging baskets, are prone to drying out quickly in hot and/or windy locations, so check daily to ensure a moist soil. Ideally water in the early morning and locate for good air circulation to reduce the risk for plant diseases. Because of nutrient uptake and loss with watering, fertilize periodically with a balanced (20% Nitrogen: 20% Phosphate: 20% Potassium) slow release, inorganic granular fertilizer or every two weeks with a liquid fertilizer. Wooden, metal or plastic trellises can be purchased or constructed then attached to a fence or wall of a building or other structure. Their purpose is to offer points of attachment for growing annual vines. At the end of the season, recycle the potting soil to the garden and plant material to the composter, then clean up containers and baskets store for the winter.

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Planting Design *Thrillers, Fillers and Spillers*

Choose a theme when selecting plants and consider location and amount of light expected for the container, hanging basket and trellis. Examples of themes could be tropical or woodland or accenting the existing yard design. Purchase healthy quality plants and install them in a higher density than normally spaced in a garden. For example, a 16-inch diameter container could be planted with nine plants from 4-inch pots or 11 plants from 2-inch cells. Planting design typically has an eye-catching thriller, a single tall plant or grouping about two times the container/basket height and located in the middle to rear. Examples include Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum*) or *Dracaena* (*Cordyline*) spike.

The second components are plant fillers which surround the thriller and give mass. Examples of fillers are *Coleus* (*Solenostemon*), *Wax Begonia* (*Begonia*), and *New Guinea Impatiens* (*Impatiens*).

The final component consists of spillers which flow over the container/basket edge. Examples include *Calibrachoa* (*Calibrachoa*), *Sweet Potato Vine* (*Ipomoea*), trailing *Verbena* (*Verbena*) and 'Wave' *Petunia* (*Petunia*).

Use contrasting plant textures through the size of foliage and flowers. Combine a variety of plant forms from upright to mounding to sprawling.

Keep the number of plant colours simple from one to three. Monochromatic or a single colour could be designed to reflect varying shades plus textures and forms. Use a colour wheel to select analogous colours that are closely related such as orange, red and violet. Similarly, you might choose complementary colours that are far apart on the colour wheel. Examples are orange and blue or yellow and violet. Neutral colours are white, grey and black. White helps reflect light while grey and darker colours are effective in showing depth.

Ageratum



Selection of Annuals

Forty species listed by genus of annuals are suggested for planting in southern Saskatchewan, Canada (Tables 1 and 2). This is a starting point as the number of cultivars for a given genus is typically multiple. When you purchase annuals check the plant tag for suitability. For example, look for cultivars that are compact or trailing.

This fact sheet's selection is divided initially into the plant's light preference from full sun to partial shade (the most predominate group) and a smaller group for partial shade to full shade. A few cultivars are adaptable from full sunlight to full shade. Examples include *Coleus* (*Solenostemon*) and *Dracaena* (*Cordyline*).

Annuals need sunlight to carry out photosynthesis to survive and grow. However, the need for the length of direct sunlight varies by species. Gardeners have created general categories or "rules of thumb" for this exposure from full sun to partial sun/shade to full shade. Check the plant label for the rating of preferred light category for best growth.

A full sun category is six+ hours of direct sunlight and full shade is less than four hours sunlight, usually present in the morning and filtered by tree canopy or structures like a building or fence.

Partial shade and partial sun are similar categories with four to six hours of sunlight. Partial shade is four to six hours of sunlight in the morning and partial sunlight is four to six hours of sunlight in the afternoon.


Under partial to full sun lighting, gardeners have the greatest number of choices for plant species.

Subgroups can be identified for specific moisture requirements. Plants that are adapted to dry soil and thus prefer less moisture include: *Marigold* (*Tagetes*) and *African Daisy* (*Dimorphotheca*). *Pansy* (*Viola*) prefers moist soils.

Plants selected for foliage are another subgroup and examples include: *Lotus Vine* (*Lotus*), *Maidenhair Vine* (*Muehlenbeckia*), *Rex Begonia* (*Begonia*), *Persian Shield* (*Strobilanthes*) and *Coleus* (*Solenostemon*).

Gardeners have become aware of the international fungal disease outbreak of *Impatiens Downy Mildew*. To confirm, we have recommended *New Guinea Impatiens* (*Impatiens hawkeri*) which is tolerant of this disease. We have not included *Garden Impatiens* (*Impatiens walleriana*) which is prone to *Impatiens Downy Mildew*.

Geranium



Trailing Lobelia



Calibrachoa



Dianthus



Begonia

Selection of Annuals Full Sun to Partial Sun

Genus	Common	Height	Spread	Use	Foliage	Flower
Antirrhinum	Snapdragon	6-4"	6-24"	Container Hanging Basket	Green	White, Cream, Red, Maroon, Pink, Purple, Orange and Bicoloured
Argyranthemum	Cobbitty Daisy	12-24"	12-24"	Container	Green	White, Pink, Yellow, Apricot, Purple
Brachyscome	Swan River Daisy	8-18"	8-18"	Container Hanging Basket	Green	Blue, Pink, White, Purple
Calendula	Pot Marigold	10-24"	8-20"	Container	Green	Cream, Yellow, Gold, Orange, Apricot
Calibrachoa	Calibrachoa	6-12"	12-24"	Container Hanging Basket	Green	Pink, Purple, Yellow, Apricot, Red-Orange, White, Blue
Cordyline	Dracaena	18-24"	18-24"	Container	Green	Grown for foliage
Gazania	Gazania	6-8"	12-18"	Container	Green	Red, Orange, Yellow, Pink, Cream
Heliotropium	Heliotrope	8"-4'	12-24"	Container	Green	Purple, Blue, White,
Ipomoea	Sweet Potato Vine	6-15'	12"-15'	Container, Trellis Hanging Basket	Lime, Green, and Burgundy	White, Blue, Pink, Red, Bicoloured
Lathyrus	Sweet Pea	12"-6'	6-12"	Trellis Hanging Basket	Green	Pink, Red, Purple, Blue, Yellow, White, Bicoloured
Linum	Flowering Flax	18-30"	6"	Container	Green	Pink, White, Red, Blue, Purple
Lobelia	Lobelia	4-10"	4-10"	Container Hanging Basket	Green	Purple, Blue, Pink, White, Red
Lotus	Lotus Vine	6-8"	36"	Container Hanging Basket	Silver, Green Vine	Orange, Red, Yellow
Nemesia	Nemesia	6-24"	4-12"	Container	Green	Red, Blue, Purple, Pink, White, Yellow, Orange, Bicoloured
Oxalis	Oxalis	5-12"	7-12"	Container Hanging Basket	Green, Purple	Yellow, White, Pink
Pelargonium	Zonal Geranium	12-18"	8-12"	Containers Hanging Baskets	Green, Variegated	White, Pink, Orange, Red, Purple, Bicoloured
Pelargonium	Ivy-Leafed Geranium	8-12"	8-12"	Containers Hanging Baskets	Glossy Green	Lavender, White, Pink, Red, Bicoloured
Pelargonium	Regal Geranium	12"	12"	Containers Hanging Baskets	Green	Pink, White, Bicoloured, Burgundy
Pennisetum	Fountain Grass	2-6'	18"-4'	Container	Purple	Tan, Gold
Pentas	Pentas	24-36"	24-36"	Container	Green	Pink, Red, Purple, White
Petunia	Petunia	6-18"	12-24"	Container Hanging Baskets	Green	Pink, Purple, Red, White Yellow, Coral, Blue
Salpiglossis	Painted- Tongue	24"	12"	Container	Green	Red, Yellow, Orange, Pink, Purple, Bicolour
Genus	Common	Height	Spread	Use	Foliage	Flower
Salvia	Salvia	12"-4'	8"-4'	Container	Green	Red, Blue, Bicoloured, Purple, Pink, Orange, Salmon, Yellow, White



Sapphire flower



Calendula



Sweet Potato Vine
Source: flickr.com

Senecio	Dusty Miller	12-24"	12-24"	Container	Silver	Yellow, Cream
Solenostemon	Coleus	6-36"	6-36"	Container	Plum, Burgundy, Copper, Chartreuse, Gold, Lime, Wine	Purple
Strobilanthes	Persian Shield	18-36"	24-36"	Container	Green, Purple, Silver	Blue
Tagetes	Marigold	7-36"	12-24"	Container	Green	Yellow, Red, Orange, Cream, Gold, Bicoloured
Thunbergia	Black-eyed Susan Vine	2-5'	24"	Trellis, Container Hanging Basket	Green	Yellow, Orange, Blue, White
Thymophylla	Dahlberg Daisy	6-12"	12"	Container Hanging Basket	Green	Yellow, Orange
Verbena	Verbena	8" -5'	10-36"	Container Hanging Basket	Green	Red, Blue, Yellow, Purple Silver, Peach, White, Pink
Viola	Pansy	3-10"	6-12"	Container	Green	Blue, Purple, Red, White, Orange, Yellow, Pink, Multi-Coloured
Zantedeschia	Calla Lily	16-36"	8-24"	Container	Green	Pink, Yellow, Cream, White, Plum, Purple, Red, Orange, Bicoloured
Zinnia	Zinnia	6-36"	12"	Container	Green	Red, Green, Purple, Gold, Yellow, Orange, Pink, White, Maroon, Brown

Selection of Annuals Partial Shade to Full Shade

Genus	Common	Height	Spread	Use	Foliage	Flower
Begonia	Wax Begonia Fibrous Begonia	6-14"	6-24"	Container	Green, Variegated with Pink, Red, Bronze, White	Pink, White, Red, Bicoloured
Begonia	Tuberous Begonia	8-24"	8-24"	Container Hanging Basket	Green	Red, Pink, White, Red, Yellow, Orange
Begonia	Rex Begonia	12-30"	12-24"	Container	Green, Bronze, Pink, Red, White, Reddish or White Variegated	Grown for Foliage
Fuchsia	Fuchsia	6-36"	6-36"	Container Hanging Basket	Green	Purple, Orange, Red, Pink, White, Bicoloured
Hedera	English Ivy	6-8"	12-36"	Container Hanging Basket	Green Variegated	Grown for Foliage
Solenostemon	Coleus	6-36"	6-36"	Container	Plum, Burgundy, Copper, Chartreuse, Gold, Lime, Wine	Purple
Impatiens	New Guinea	6-36"	12-24"	Container	Green, Variegated	Purple, Red, Burgundy, White, Yellow, Orange, Apricot, Pink Bicoloured
Myosotis	Forget-Me-Not	6-12"	6"	Container	Green	Pink, Blue, White
Sutera	Bacopa	3-6"	12-20"	Container Hanging Basket	Green	White, Lavender Pink, Rose, Violet

Other Resources

Online

Net PS Plant Finder Tool – Online Plant Catalogue for Nurseries and Garden Centres, Northscaping.com
Dutch Growers, Plant Finder, dutchgrowers.ca

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