



ANNUALS

Annuals are plants which grow to maturity and bloom within a few months of seeding. Their life span is completed within one growing season. They are the mainstay of the summer garden, providing continuous bloom all summer in garden beds, containers, window boxes, and as cut flowers.

Each year Surry Gardens not only stocks the old favorites, but also presents new varieties. For example, in recent years the kinds of petunias and marigolds available to the gardener have multiplied greatly. We now stock cascading plants, large flowers, as well as small, and flowers in an ever expanding array of colors. **In making a selection our annual catalog is invaluable.**

Light: Plants have distinctive preferences in how much light they need. A plant that needs full sun will probably do fine with 6 hours of sunlight, as it will receive reflected light also. Very few annuals will bloom in moderate to dense shade, but some, like impatiens, thrive in light shade.

Watering: Between rains, plan on watering every week. In extremely hot weather more frequent watering is a necessity. Watering is more than just a sprinkling with a hose. You want the soil wet down to below the roots. As difficult as it is, try not to wet the leaves, which encourages mildew and fungal diseases, especially on petunias and zinnias. The best time to water is on sunny, cloudless mornings.

To gauge the water needs of a plant look at the leaves. Gray needle-like leaved plants need the least amount of water. Flowers with big, dark green, papery leaves will need the most water. Watch the foliage; the leaves may droop during the day, but should perk up at night. If the leaves are still limp in the morning water immediately.

Soil: For most annuals any ordinary garden soil will do. When preparing the beds incorporate additional organic matter to help retain water and to provide nutrients. For flowers an application of a 5-10-10 fertilizer is indicated, or broadcast 14-14-14 Osmocote after planting.

Transplanting: Buy only healthy, well grown seedlings, such as those sold by Surry Gardens. Mass produced plants, from chain stores, are much more likely to suffer transplanting shock. Dig a hole and fill it with water. When it drains fill it again. This provides moisture right where the plant needs it. If the plant is root bound cut the bottom of the root ball off with a sharp knife before planting.

Care: Weed pulling after a rain can be done quickly. Cultivating dry soil to a shallow depth will kill emerging weeds, but do not cultivate a moist soil, unless you really like weeding. Generally you will not have to worry about insect damage. Remember to deadhead spent blooms, so the plant will not put energy into seed production.

SPACING: To avoid stunting their growth and increasing the chance of disease, plants should not be over crowded. Ageratum, lobelia, pansies, dwarf French marigolds, and sweet alyssium look best when spaced 6" apart. Plant begonias, dusty miller, nicotianas, petunias and dwarf salvias 8" apart. Most other plants look good spaced at 10" apart. Geraniums and larger plants should be planted 12" or more apart. Generally plants look better planted in a triangular pattern, rather than in a line or in a grid pattern.