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Annual Flowers for Specific Uses in Nebraska

Wondering what annual flowers to plant where? This NebGuide can help.

Dale T. Lindgren, Extension horticultureiculturist

Annual flowers grow from seed, come into flower and die in a single growing season. The following lists of annual flowers are grouped for specific uses in Nebraska. Common names are listed first, followed by scientific names.

Annuals for Poor Soils

These plants will flower satisfactorily where soils are low in nutrients and organic matter:

- Coreopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria*)
- Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*)
- Four-O'clock (*Mirabilis jalapa*)
- Moss Rose (*Portulaca grandiflora*)
- Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)
- Spider Flower (*Cleome spinosa*)
- Sweet Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*)



Annuals for Hot, Dry Regions

Heat and drought are not ideal for these flowers, but they continue to bloom satisfactorily if soil and other factors are normal and a minimum amount of moisture is available to the plant.

- Annual Phlox (*Phlox drummondii*)
- California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)
- Cockscomb (*Celosia cristata*)
- Coreopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria*)
- Creeping Zinnia (*Sanvitalia procumbens*)
- Four-O'clock (*Mirabilis jalapa*)
- Gaillardia (*G. amblyodon* & *G. pulchella*)

- Gazania (*Gazania longiscapa*)
- Larkspur, Annual (*Delphinium ajacis*)
- Morning Glory (*Ipomoea purpurea*)
- Moss Rose (*Portulaca grandiflora*)
- Spider Flower (*Cleome spinosa*)
- Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)
- Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*)

Annuals for Cut Flowers

This is a partial listing of annual flowers which may be used as cut flowers:

- Annual Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*)
- Annual Dahlia (*Dahlia pinnata*)
- Annual Phlox (*Phlox drummondii*)
- Common Stock (*Mathiola incana*)
- Coreopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria*)
- Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*)
- Cosmos (*Cosmos* spp.)
- Gaillardia (*Gaillardia* spp)
- Larkspur, Annual (*Delphinium ajacis*)
- Lisianthus (*Lisianthus russellianus*)
- Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)
- Marigold (*Tagetes* spp.)
- Mignonette (*Reseda odorata*)
- Pansy (*Viola* spp.)
- Pincushion Flower (*Scabiosa atropurpurea*)
- Salvia (*Salvia* spp.)
- Satinflower (*Godetia grandiflora*)
- Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*)
- Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*)

Annuals with Ornamental Foliage

Some annuals have unique, unusual or colorful foliage that has as much or more ornamental value than the flowering parts:

- Amaranthus (*Amaranthus* spp.)
- Burning Bush, Summer Cypress (*Kochia scoparia f. trichophylla*)
- Coleus (*Coleus blumei*)
- Dusty Miller (*Senecio cineraria*)
- Flowering Cabbage & Kale (*Brassica oleracea*)
- Ornamental Grasses
- Snow-on-the-Mountain (*Euphorbia marginata*)
- Wax Begonia (*Begonia semperflorens*)

Annuals for Partial Shade

Shade is not necessarily a requirement for these flowers, but they will do well on sites where there is sun for only part of the day.

- Annual Lupines (*Lupinus, hybrids*)
- Candytuft (*Iberis spp.*)
- China Aster (*Callistephus chinensis*)
- Coleus (*Coleus blumei*)
- Impatiens (*Impatiens spp.*)
- Pansy (*Viola spp.*)
- Satinflower (*Godetia grandiflora*)
- Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*)
- Sweet Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*)
- Sweet Sultan (*Centaurea moschata*)
- Wax Begonia (*Begonia semperflorens*)
- Wishbone Flower (*Torenia fournieri*)

Annuals Which Vine or Climb

- Balloon Vine (*Cardiospermum halicacabum*)
- Balsam Apple (*Momordica balsamina*)
- Balsam Pear (*Momordica charantia*)
- Canary-Bird Flower (*Tropaeolum peregrinum*)
- Cardinal Climber (*Quamoclit sloteri*)
- Cup-and-Saucer Vine (*Cobaea scandens*)
- Hyacinth Bean (*Dolichos lablab*)
- Morning Glory (*Ipomoea purpurea*)
- Scarlet Runner Bean (*Phaseolus coccineus*)
- Sweet Pea (*Lathyrus odoratus*)
- White Runner Bean (*Phaseolus coccineus albus*)
- Wild Cucumber (*Echinocystis lobata*)

Annuals for Fragrance

- Annual Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*)
- Candytuft (*Iberis spp.*)
- Garden Verbena (*Verbena horticultureensis*)
- Heliotrope (*Heliotropium spp.*)
- Mignonette (*Reseda odorata*)
- Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)
- Pincushion Flower (*Scabiosa atropurpurea*)
- Spider Flower (*Cleome spinosa*)
- Sweet Pea (*Lathyrus odoratus*)
- Sweet Sultan (*Centaurea moschata*)
- Wallflower (*Cheiranthus spp.*)

Annuals for Hanging Baskets

- Dwarf Marigold (*Tagetes pumila*)
- Dwarf Morning Glory (*Convolvulus tricolor*)
- Flowering Maple (*Abutilon hybridum*)
- Ivy Geranium (*Pelargonium peltatum*)
- Petunia (*Petunia spp.*)
- Pink Sand Verbena (*Abronia umbellata*)

- Sapphire Flower (*Browallia speciosa major*)
- Sweet Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*)
- Trailing Lantana (*Lantana montevidensis*)
- Variegated Periwinkle (*Vinca major variegata*)

Annuals for Edging

Edging plants are low growing plants used to edge patios, walks, shrub borders and perennial borders. They also can be planted in the foreground of annual flower beds.

- Ageratum (*Ageratum houstonianum*)
- Candytuft (*Iberis* spp.)
- Dianthus (*Dianthus* spp.)
- Dusty Miller (*Senecio cineraria*)
- Lobelia (*Lobelia erinus*)
- Marigold, Dwarf types (*Tagetes* spp.)
- Moss Rose (*Portulaca grandiflora*)
- Pansy (*Viola* spp.)
- Petunia, Dwarf and Miniature (*Petunia* spp.)
- Sweet Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*)
- Verbena (*Verbena horticultureensis*)

Annuals to Use in Dried Arrangements

Certain annual flowers can be preserved by drying. These are commonly called "everlastings."

- Annual Baby's-Breath (*Gypsophila elegans*)
- Bells-of-Ireland (*Molucella laevis*)
- Cockscomb (*Celosia* spp.)
- Corn, Ornamental
- Cucumberleaf Sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*)
- Cupid's Dart (*Catananche* spp.)
- Globe Amaranth (*Gomphrena globosa*)
- Gourds
- Grasses, Ornamental
- Immortelle (*Xeranthemum annuum*)
- Love-in-a-Mist (*Nigella damascena*)
- Rose Everlasting (*Helipterum roseum*)
- Statice (*Limonium sinuatum*)
- Strawflower (*Helichrysum bracteatum*)
- Swan River Everlasting (*Helipterum manglesii*)
- Winged Everlasting (*Ammobium alatum*)

Annuals for Moist, Well-drained Soils

Use these annuals where the soil remains damp continuously.

- Annual Woodruff (*Asperula orientalis*)
- Balsam (*Impatiens balsamina*)
- Bugloss (*Anchusa capensis*)

- Dahlia (*Dahlia X hybrid*)
- Forget-Me-Not (*Myosotis sylvatica*)
- Globe Candytuft (*Iberis umbellata*)
- Monkey Flower (*Mimulus, hybrids*)
- Nicotiana, Flowering Tobacco (*Nicotiana alata*)
- Pansy (*Viola spp.*)

Annuals that will Self-Seed

These annuals tend to reproduce from previous years' seed without the need to replant each year:

- Bachelor's-buttons (*Centaurea cyanus*)
- Hollyhock (*Alcea rosea*)
- Moss Rose (*Portulaca grandiflora*)

Annuals that Produce Colorful Fruit

A few annuals, although not considered a flower, have colorful fruit.

- Ornamental Gourds
- Ornamental Pepper (*Capsicum annuum*)

Annuals for Amusement

Some plants have special features which may not have great ornamental value but which are unique for one or more traits.

- Sensitive Plant (*Mimosa pudica*)

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