

**Annuals** germinate, grow, flower, and die--roots and all--in a single year. Many plants we call “annuals” are actually perennials in their native climates.

Annuals bloom to produce seeds that guarantee the survival of the species. **Perennials** work to establish a root system and do not bloom as often.

**Annuals should not be planted outdoors until the danger of frost has passed—April 15 in our area.** FYI: Georgia is divided by three USDA climatic zones; the last frost date varies by several weeks from coastal and southern Georgia to the mountains.

There is always the urge to plant too soon. **Many annuals, even if not injured by low temperatures, will not grow well until the soil warms sufficiently.** When young plants are growing slowly or not at all, they are usually more susceptible to diseases such as root rot.

**Deadheading** a plant repeatedly causes it to bloom continuously. Scientists have created varieties of plants that are sterile which bloom repeatedly and do not strive to make seeds. These plants are called “**self-cleaning.**”

- Annuals can be used in containers such as window boxes, hanging baskets, and pots.
- Annuals can add color around a shrub or provide an entire bed of beautiful color.
- Annual vines provide vertical interest and attract pollinators.
- Annuals are easy, long-blooming, and inexpensive.

Select annuals according to heights, spread, color, and length of bloom.

## **Self-cleaning Annuals** It's all about the variety.

lantana      calibrachoa      coleus      New Guinea impatiens  
Angelonia      wave petunia      sweet potato vine      begonia  
vinca      cleome      euphorbia diamond frost      4 o'clocks and  
more. .

Bed preparation--Test soil, amend soil, check drainage. Most annuals grow well in a variety of soil types as long as the soil is capable of holding a sufficient amount of water and the soil is well drained. **To test for drainage**, dig a hole about 10 inches deep and fill it with water. The next day fill the hole again and see how long the water remains in it; if it drains away in 8 to 10 hours or less, drainage is satisfactory for most annuals.

Rain Gauge: **Rain does not usually satisfy watering requirements for annuals in pots.**

**Have the soil tested.** Soil test bags are available for pick up at The Fulton County Extension office: 7741 Roswell Rd. NE; Atlanta, GA 30359. A pH of 6.0 to 6.8 is satisfactory for most annuals. Most Georgia soils are acid and require the addition of lime to correct pH. In the absence of a soil test, add a complete fertilizer such as 10-10-10 at the rate of 1 lb. per 100 sq. ft. A single application of such fertilizers will rarely provide season-long nutritional requirements; supplemental applications may be necessary

Annuals in Containers- containers should be chosen based not only on aesthetics, but should be proportional to the type and number of plants to be grown. **The prerequisite for any container is that it have an adequate drainage hole(s).**

**Ready to use soil products** are superior for pots. Fill the bottom of the pot w/bark chips or pine cones—something organic.

Care and Maintenance: Annuals in containers require frequent watering and should be fertilized monthly. Deadhead and groom to encourage blooms.

Planting-Some annuals can be **directly sowed** into the soil: zinnia, marigolds, and sunflowers are examples.

Annuals can be started indoors in early March using **seeds**.

When transplanting into beds or containers, annuals should be set at approximately the same depth they were growing in the seedling flat or pot -- avoid planting too deep or too shallow.

Spacing will vary according to the size of the mature plant and according to the desired landscape effect.

“Fluff” the roots before putting the plant in the ground/pot.

Most annuals look best in the landscape when used in odd-numbered groups rather than as individual specimens.

Once transplanting is complete, water the plants thoroughly. Pay close attention the first few weeks since young plants can dry out quickly until they develop a more extensive root system.

**To view my notes:** Roswell Garden Club:  
Roswellgardenclub.com choose Education

**UGA Extension Bulletin:** Flowering Annuals for Georgia Gardeners Bulletin B954 contains great info and list of annual plants. Questions from gardeners can be posed to the experts through this website:

<https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B954&title=Flowering%20Annuals%20for%20Georgia%20Gardens>

