Spring Webinar Series
2 P.M. CST

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE ➔ CHANGING LIVES

NDSU EXTENSION
Upcoming Webinars

• Feb. 19 – Growing Tomatoes in North Dakota
  – Tom Kalb, NDSU Extension Horticulturist

• Feb. 26 – Building a Terrarium
  – Esther McGinnis, Associate Professor, NDSU Extension Horticulturist
Zoom Controls

Meeting Topic: Field2Fork - Tom Kalb Growing Vegetables
Host: Extension FCW
Invitation URL: https://zoom.us/j/609371435
Participant ID: 22

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Growing Flowers for Fun or Profit

Don Kinzler
Extension Agent, Cass County Horticulture
Flowers make our homes and cities beautiful.
Flowers have been an important part of our lives since ancient times. Early settlers soon planted flowers around their homesteads.
Flowers enrich our lives and decorate our home yards and businesses.
The basic culture of flowers is the same, whether growing them for fun or profit.
Two common categories of flowers: Annuals and Perennials
Annual Flowers

Simply called “annuals” or “bedding plants.” Live for one growing season, flower, produce seed, don’t survive winter.
Perennial Flowers

Called simply “perennials.” Plants live two or more years. Plants die to the ground during winter, and emerge again in spring.
Annual Flowers

- Unparalleled in color and excitement.
- Extended bloom for much of growing season.
- Main disadvantage: need to replant each year
Fit annuals to their preferred light: Sun vs. shade.
Three Ways to Use Annuals

1. Flowerbed composed of all annuals.
2. Annuals in combination with perennials.
3. Annuals in containers. Planted in pots and planters for use on balconies, decks and doorsteps.
Annual flowers grow best in soil rich in organic material like compost or peat moss.
Annuals can be planted in rows, or informally. Check tags for height and width of each type.
Fall cleanup of annual flower beds: If plants are disease-free, they can simply be cut up, or mowed over, returning the organic material to the soil. Diseased material should be removed.
Annuals combine well with perennials to create splashes of color and bridge times when perennials aren’t in bloom.
Annuals create colorful containers for balconies, decks, and doorsteps. Design each with a thriller, a spiller, and a filler.
Annuals are “heavy feeders.” Slow release fertilizers provide season-long nutrition. Water-soluble fertilizers can be applied every 2 weeks.
To keep annuals flowering longer, “deadhead” them by removing “spent” flowers before they the seed pod enlarges.
How do you obtain annual flowers? One way is to buy transplants from garden centers.
Or you can start annuals yourself indoors from seed.
If *direct-seeded* outdoors into flowerbed soil, most annuals take too long to grow and bloom, which is why they’re usually started early and “transplanted” out. Zinnia, Cosmos, Four O-Clock, and Marigolds are 4 types that can be successful.
Perennial Flowers

Flowers that live 2 or more years.

Often called “herbaceous” perennials, because they die back to the ground each winter. (Trees and shrubs are “woody” perennials, whose tops survive winter.)
Perennials that are “winter hardy” for our region emerge each spring from underground roots or structures that live from year-to-year.
Perennials have several types of underground structures from which they arise.

Many perennials have fibrous root systems, attached to a “crown”, which is the term given to the point between above-ground stems and below-ground roots.
The underground structures of some perennials are bulbs, such as lilies.
The underground structures of some perennials are modified stems, such as the rhizomes of iris.
Some underground structures, like these gladiolus corms, aren’t winter-hardy, so they must be dug and stored indoors during winter.
How are perennials used? They’re beautiful in a perennial bed all their own. Or…
Perennials make great additions to our landscapes, along with shrubs.
Perennials can be classified as long-lived and short-lived types.

Some perennial types can live for many decades in flowerbeds or landscapes.

Other types of perennials are shorter-lived, having a lifespan of 3 to 5 years.

Peonies, such as in this photo, can live for centuries.
Other perennials, like these delphiniums, have shorter lifespans, living 3 to 5 years, and sometimes need replacing if they weaken and don’t return in spring.
For a successful perennial bed, combine types that bloom in spring, midsummer, and fall, for ever-changing, continuous bloom.
Investigate the light requirements of perennials. Some prefer shade, others sun.
Perennials give a chance to exercise patience, as most types require about 3 years to develop into plants capable of full bloom.
Nearly all perennials grow best in soil rich in organic material, like compost or peat moss.
When planting, check tags for the height and width, giving each plant room for its eventual “footprint” of space.
Perennials love mulch. A layer 3” to 5” thick reduces weeds, conserves moisture, and keeps soil healthy.
“Deadhead” flowers by removing withered blossoms to prevent seed pod formation.
Perennials aren’t necessarily less work than annuals. Although they don’t require yearly planting, weed control can be a challenge.

To control weeds in perennial flowers, hand weeding is often the best alternative.

Mulches can reduce weeds.

Pre-emergent weed herbicide granules can be applied before weeds establish.
Perennials might need dividing if they begin to decline. Divide spring-blooming types in fall, and fall-blooming types in spring.
In what forms are perennials purchased? (1) dormant bare-root, (2) potted plants, (3) bulbs or other dormant, underground structures.
Above-Ground, Perennial “tops” are best left intact during winter, and cut back in spring.

To protect perennials, a winter mulch of leaves or straw can be added after the ground freezes.
These same principles apply, if growing annuals or perennials for profit.
There are several ways to make flower-growing profitable.

Cut flowers can be sold at farmers markets, or sold wholesale to florists.

“Bedding Plants” can be raised in a greenhouse for sale to customers buying packs of transplants.

Perennial roots or underground structures can be grown in fields and multiplied by division. Once divisions are saleable size, they can be dug and sold, such as peonies, iris, daylilies and lilies.
Whether growing annuals and perennials for fun or profit, they’re beautiful!
Questions?
www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork