Annual and Perennial Flowers for North Dakota

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Annuals and perennials are an excellent source of color and beauty for North Dakota landscapes.

Annuals are used for their continuous flower color throughout most of the growing season. Perennials are used for their permanence in the landscape setting, offering specific periods of bloom, relatively low maintenance and wide adaptability.

While annuals are started anew each growing season, perennials usually can be divided in the spring or fall. These new divisions can be replanted or given to a friend or neighbor.

Because North Dakota summers are so unpredictable, putting out transplants after killing frost threats have passed usually is a good idea.

This publication provides suggestions for flowers for specific locations in and around the landscape. These include low-growing and tall plants, and plants for shade and full-sun/dry locations, massing, attracting pollinators and fragrance.

This does not mean a plant selected for a particular location absolutely cannot grow in another type of location. This is merely a guide indicating where the selected plants grow best under those conditions. Some plants may be listed in more than one category.
Annuals

- **Low-growing (6 to 8 inches)**
  - Ageratum
  - Alyssum
  - Dahlberg daisy
  - Dianthus
  - Dusty Miller
  - Lobelia
  - Marigolds (French or dwarf)
  - Moss rose
  - Nemophilia
  - Nierembergia
  - Pansy
  - Petunias (spreading) (Figure 1)
  - Snapdragons (dwarf)
  - Vinca (spreading)
  - Zinnia (dwarf)

- **Intermediate (10 to 20 inches)**
  - Angelonia (Figure 2)
  - Begonia (wax)
  - Gaillardia
  - Gomphrena
  - Geranium
  - Impatiens
  - Marigold
  - Petunia
  - Salvia (*S. splendens*)
  - Verbena
  - Vinca
  - Zinnia (*Z. angustifolia*)

- **Tall (24 to 48-plus inches)**
  - Cannas
  - Celosia (Figure 3)
  - Cleome
  - Cosmos
  - Fountain grass
  - Gaura
  - Marigold (American or African)
  - Nicotiana
  - Snapdragons
  - Statice
  - Zinnia (*Z. elegans*)

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**Figure 1.** Spreading petunias are used effectively in the front of this landscape bed.
(Esther McGinnis, NDSU)

**Figure 2.** Angelonias are a great medium-height plant.
(Esther McGinnis, NDSU)

**Figure 3.** Celosia adds color and height to the garden.
(Esther McGinnis, NDSU)

**Figure 4.** Coleus leaves brighten the shade.
(Esther McGinnis, NDSU)
Plants for Shade
Begonia (wax and tuberous)
Coleus (Figure 4)
Dahlberg daisy (light shade)
Impatiens (Standard and New Guinea)
Lobelia (light shade)
Myosotis (forget-me-not)
Nemesia (light shade)
Nemophila (light shade)
Nicotiana (light shade)
Nigella
Pansy
Poppy (light shade or east side)
Torenia (light shade)

Full Sun/Dry Locations
Calendula
California poppy
Cleome
Dusty Miller (Senecio)
Gaillardia
Lisianthus (Eustoma)
Moss rose (Portulaca)
Rudbeckia (Figure 5)
Statice (Limonium)
Sanvitalia
Tithonia (Mexican sunflower)
Verbena
Vinca

Striking Flower Show – Massed Plantings
Alyssum
Cannas
Dianthus
Dahlberg daisy
Geranium
Marigold
Moss rose (Portulaca)
Petunia
Salvia
Snapdragon
Verbena
Zinnia

Annual Plants for Attracting Pollinators
Alyssum
Cleome
Cosmos
Lantana (Figure 6)
Marigold
Pentas
Sunflower
Verbena
Zinnia

Annuals Planted for Fragrance
Agastache
Alyssum
Four-o’clock
Heliotrope
Lavender
Mignonette
Moonflower (vine)
Nasturtium
Nicotiana
Pincushion flower
Snapdragon
Stock
Sweet pea

Annuals for Drying
Amaranthus (A. caudatus)
Celosia
Fountain grass (Pennisetum sp.)
Gomphrena
Salvia (S. farinacea)
Statice
Strawflower

Vining Annuals
Black-eyed Susan vine (Thunbergia)
Cup and saucer vine (Cobea)
Morning glory (Ipomoea)
Purple hyacinth bean (Lablab)
Sweet pea

Good for Cut Flowers
Dahlias
Dianthus
Fountain grass (Pennisetum)
Gladiolus
Gomphrena
Lisianthus
Snapdragons (Tall)
Statice
Sunflower
Zinnia (Z.elegans)
Perennials

Perennials often are used to solve troublesome spots in the landscape. Some of these areas might be wet, dry or shady, or possess infertile soil. Perennials are effective as background plantings, for naturalizing or simply as a border to define a planting bed.

Wet areas could be planted with Iris sibirica, Monarda didyma and Viola odorata. For dry areas, consider using yarrow (Achillea) or daylilies (Hemerocallis). Where the soil is poor, blue false indigo (Baptisia australis) could be used.

For tall background plantings, consider Phlox paniculata or Boltonia asteroides ‘Snowbank.’ Naturalized plantings may use prairie gayfeather (Liatris pycnostachya) or purple coneflower (Echinacea purpurea), while rocky areas will accommodate plantings of columbine (Aquilegia canadensis) and basket-of-gold (Aurinia saxatilis ‘Citrina’).

Borders can be accented effectively with snow-in-summer (Cerastium tomentosum) or moss pink (Phlox subulata).

Perennial selection can be made on the basis of flower color and the season of bloom. The following selections will highlight these qualities.

Figure 7. Campanula glomerata ‘Joan Elliot’ has lovely purple petals. (Esther McGinnis, NDSU)

Figure 8. The pink spires of astilbe light up the shade. (Esther McGinnis, NDSU)

Figure 9. Coreopsis adds cheer to the garden with its yellow flowers. (Esther McGinnis, NDSU)

Figure 10. Echinacea ‘White Swan’ brightens a garden. (Esther McGinnis, NDSU)

Figure 11. Delphinium brings height and a vivid blue to the landscape. (Esther McGinnis, NDSU)
Color Guide

Blue to Purple
Ajuga
Aquilegia
Campanula (Figure 7)
Delphinium
Echinacea
Hosta
Iris
Liatris
Nepeta
Phlox
Platycodon
Salvia
Scabiosa
Symphyotrichum (aster)
Veronica
Viola

Gray to Blue, and Variegated Foliage
Achillea
Ajuga
Artemisia
Cerastium
Dianthus
Echinops
Echinacea
Hosta
Lamium
Nepeta
Sedum
Thymus

White
Achillea ‘Angels Breath’
Arabis albida
Aruncus
Astilbe
Boltonia
Cerastium
Dendranthemum
Dianthus
Dentura
Dictamnus
Echinacea (Figure 10)
Hosta
Iris
Paeonia
Phlox
Symphyotrichum (aster)
Yucca

Pink to Red
Achillea millefolium
Astilbe (Figure 8)
Boltonia
Dianthus
Dentura
Echinacea
Erigeron
Geranium
Hemorocallis
Heuchera
Iris
Lobelia cardinalis
Lychnis chalcedonica
Paeonia
Phlox
Physostegia
Salvia ‘Rose Queen’
Sedum spectabile
Symphyotrichum (aster)

Yellow to Orange
Achillea
‘Coronation Gold’
Alchemilla
Aurinia saxatilis
Coreopsis (Figure 9)
Gaillardia
Hemorocallis
Heliopsis
Iris
Ligularia
Linum flavum
Oenothera
Papaver orientale
Ratibida
Rudbeckia
Sedum
Solidago

Season of Bloom

May to June
Ajuga
Cerastium
Dicentra
Dictamnus
Erigeron
Geranium
Iris
Lychnis chalcedonica
Paeonia
Viola

June to July
Aruncus
Campanula
Delphinium (Figure 11)
Heuchera
Salvia ‘Rose Queen’

July to August
Achillea ‘Angels Breath’
Ligularia
Lobelia cardinalis
Monarda
Physostegia
Ratibida

August to September
Boltonia
Sedum spectabile
Symphyotrichum (aster)

Extended Season of Bloom
Achillea millefolium
Aquilegia (Figure 12)
Coreopsis
Echinacea
Linum flavum
Dianthus
Gaillardia
Oenothera
Heliopsis
Rudbeckia
Sedum
Solidago
Veronica

Figure 12. Aquilegia comes in different colors.
(Esther McGinnis, NDSU)
Perennials

- Foliar Impacts
  - Gray, Blue and Variegated – Season long
    - Achillea
    - Ajuga
    - Artemisia
    - Cerastium
    - Dianthus
    - Echinops
    - Gypsophila
    - Heuchera
    - Hosta
    - Lamium
    - Perovskia
    - Sedum
    - Thymus

- Heights
  - Less than 12 inches
    - Ajuga
    - Asarum
    - Aurinia
    - Cerastium
    - Dianthus deltoides
    - Coreopsis ‘Golden Shower’
    - Iris cristata
    - Iris pumila
    - Oenothera missourensis
      (Figure 13)
    - Phlox subulata
    - Sedum
    - Viola
  - More than 24 inches
    - Achillea filipendulina
    - Aquilegia canadensis
    - Aster
    - Astilbe
    - Boltonia asteroides ‘Snowbank’
    - Campanula glomerata
    - Coreopsis ‘Golden Shower’
    - Delphinium elatum
    - Dictamnus albus ‘Purpureus’
    - Echinacea purpurea
    - Eryngium X zabelii ‘Amethyst’
    - Hosta sieboldiana

- Shade-tolerant Perennials
  - Ajuga spp.
  - Aquilegia canadensis
  - Asarum canadense
  - Astilbe spp.
  - Bergenia cordifolia
  - Campanula spp.
  - Centaurea macrocephala
  - Cimicifuga racemosa
  - Coreopsis spp.
  - Dicentra spectabilis
  - Digitalis spp.
  - Hosta spp.
  - Lamium spp.
  - Mertensia virginica
  - Myosotis spp.
  - Phlox divaricata
  - Ranunculus repens
  - Sedum kamtschaticum

Figure 13. Oenothera is a low-growing perennial. (Esther McGinnis, NDSU)

Figure 14. Yucca thrives in dry soils. (Esther McGinnis, NDSU)
All-America Selection (AAS) Winners

All-America Selections is an independent, nonprofit organization that tests new varieties of annuals and vegetables across the U.S. Each year, All-America Selections winners are announced. Interested gardeners should consider using these varieties in their plant selections, whether these are current winners or winners from previous years.

These are the most extensively tested herbaceous plants in North America. NDSU has two AAS demonstration gardens: one on the campus in Fargo and the other at the Williston Research Extension Center. There, you can observe just how well these selections are doing under “normal” care.

For more information on All-America Selection winners, go to www.all-americaselections.org.

The Perennial Plant of the Year

The Perennial Plant of the Year (POY) program began in 1990 to showcase a perennial that is a standout among its competitors. Perennials chosen are suitable for a wide range of growing climates, require low maintenance, have multiple-season interest and are relatively pest/disease-free. If you are looking for an excellent perennial for your next landscape project or something reliable for your gardens, make sure to check out the Perennial Plant of the Year archive list at www.perennialplant.org/education/plant-of-the-year. More information about other perennials can be found in the Plant Database.

USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Plant Hardiness Zone Map (Figure 15) provides guidance for planting perennials. The southern two-thirds of the state is in zone 4. Gardeners in zone 4 should look for perennials that are hardy to zone 4 or a lower number.

The northern one-third of the state is in zone 3. Gardeners there should purchase perennials that are hardy to zone 3 or lower. Hardiness zones are indicated on the plant label.

Gardeners who live near the boundary of zone 4 and 3 should be more conservative and purchase zone 3 plants.

Figure 15. The USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map is based on the average lowest winter temperature for the years 1976-2005.
Common Name Reference

**Annuals**

Ageratum — Floss flower  
Amaranthus — Love-lies-bleeding  
Antirrhinum — Snapdragons  
Begonia — Begonia  
Briza — Quaking grass, rattlesnake grass  
Calendula — Calendula  
Campanula — Bellflower  
Catharanthus — Annual vinca  
Celosia — Cockscomb, plum and crested  
Centarea — Basket flower  
Chrysanthemum — Chrysanthemum  
Cleome — Spider flower  
Coleus — Coleus, flame nettle  
Consolida — Larkspur  
Coreopsis — Calliopsis  
Cosmos — Cosmos  
Cynoglossum — Chinese forget-me-not  
Dianthus — Pink, sweet William  
Dyssodia — Dahlberg daisy  
Eschscholzia — California poppy  
Eustoma — Lisanthus, prairie gentian  
Gaillardia — Blanket flower  
Gerbera — Transvaal daisy  
Gomphrena — Globe amaranth  
Helichrysum — Strawflower  
Iberis — Rocket candytuft  
Impatiens — Garden balsam  
Ipomoea — Moonflower, morning glory  
Lathyrus — Sweet pea  
Limonium — Statice, sea lavender  
Lobelia — Lobelia  
Lobularia — Sweet alyssum  
Moluccella — Bells-of-Ireland  
Myosotis — Forget-me-not  
Nemesia — Pouch nemesia  
Nicotiana — Flowering tobacco  
Nigella — Nigella, fennel flower  
Papaver — Poppy, Iceland poppy  
Pelargonium — Geranium  
Petunia — Petunia  
Phlox — Annual phlox  
Portulaca — Portulaca, moss rose  
Rudbeckia — Coneflower  
Salvia — Salvia, sage  
Senecio — Dusty Miller  
Tagetes — Marigold  
Tithonia — Mexican sunflower  
Tropaeolum — Nasturtium  
Viola — Violet, viola, pansy  
Zinnia — Zinnia

**Perennials**

Achillea — Yarrow  
Ajuga — Bugleweed  
Alchemilla — Lady’s mantle  
Anaphalis — Pearly everlasting  
Aquilegia — Columbine  
Arabis — Rock cress  
Artemisia — Wormwood  
Aruncus — Goatsbeard  
Astilbe — Astilbe, false spirea  
Aurinia — Basket-of-gold  
Boltonia — Boltonia  
Campanula — Bellflower  
Cerastium — Snow-in-summer  
Coreopsis — Tickseed  
Delphinium — Delphinium, larkspur  
Dendranthema — Garden mum  
Dianthus — Pink  
Dicentra — Bleeding heart  
Dictamnus — Gas plant  
Echinacea — Purple coneflower  
Erigeron — Fleabane  
Gaillardia — Blanket flower  
Geranium — Cranesbill  
Gypsophila — Baby’s breath  
Heliospium — False sunflower, oxeye  
Hemerocallis — Daylily  
Heuchera — Alumroot  
Hosta — Plantain lily  
Iris — Iris  
Lamium — Dead nettle  
Liatris — Blazing star, gayfeather  
Ligularia — Bigleaf goldenray  
Linum — Flax  
Lobelia — Cardinal flower  
Lycnhis — Arkwright campion, rose campion  
Monarda — Bee balm  
Myosotis — Forget-me-not  
 Nepeta — Catmint  
Oenothera — Sundrops, primrose  
Paonia — Peony  
Papaver — Poppy  
Perovskia — Azure sage, Russian sage  
Phlox — Prairie phlox  
Physostegia — Obedience, false dragonhead  
Ratibida — Prairie coneflower  
Rudbeckia — Coneflower, black-eyed Susan  
Salvia — Sage  
Scabiosa — Pincushion flower  
Sedum — Stonecrop  
Solidago — Goldenrod  
Symphyotrichum — Aster  
Thymus — Thyme  
Veronica — Speedwell  
Viola — Violet  
Yucca — Adam’s needle

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