

“Take Time to Let the Flowers Grow”

Submitted by Jackie Engelken - Epsilon Eta - Topeka - 1987

Growing garden flowers can be rewarding since they are the most colorful, cheerful, and attention getting of all the landscape elements. Everyone appreciates the beauty of flowers. Almost every color, variety of size and texture is available.

Beauty cannot be measured by the yield, size or taste. Most important is that it pleases the viewer. Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.

Growing your flowers outside will provide season enjoyment. Not only will you enjoy it but your family and neighbors and the public that drives by your house each day. Growing flowers is not an exact science, but rather requires good judgment. Experience is the best teacher.

Planning the flower garden

1. Fit it in to the total landscape
2. Front yard near entrance
3. Back yard at edge of property
4. Taller flowers, at back of border
5. If bed is in full sun, use only flowers that will tolerate heat
6. Shady area, use only flowers that grow in that situation

Buying seed

1. Be sure to buy seed that has been recently produced. Not more than one year old.
2. Old seed may have lost vitality, so germinate slowly or it will produce poor seeding
3. Look for new varieties listed as F, hybrid, which are the best
4. Do not save seed from hybrid flowers. The flowers from these seeds will not be true to color and type.

Planting the flower garden

1. Wait until damage of frost is past before seeding or setting out started plants
2. Usually May 10 for central Kansas
3. A few of the hardy types can be planted in April
4. When using started plants—be sure to space them properly since they will not be thinned
5. Cloudy days or late afternoon is the best time to transplant
6. Water the transplants immediately. Most flowers need 1' per week

Growing annual flowers

1. Many will bloom all season long
2. Some people object to planting annuals every year. But it has advantages.
3. You work the soil each year, improving or treating it as needed
4. Also you can add new varieties, or rearrange your flower bed

Terms you should know:

Annual flower - A plant that germinates, grows, flowers, and dies within one season

Cultivate - To loosen the soil around a plant and cut out all weeds

Fertilizer - Material applied to the soil to supply nutrients for plants to grow

Germination - Growth of a seed which results in the development of a seedling having a root and stem

Insecticide - Chemical material used to control insects

Mulch - Covering applied to the soil to discourage weed growth and retain moisture

Why some plants fail to grow:

The longer you garden and the more plants you grow, the chances are that you will experience difficulties. Successful gardener must learn to diagnose the problems. These are some of the most common sources of trouble.

1. Lack of proper soil (such as dirt dug from basements)
2. Lack of adequate soil preparation. Plants set in hard compact soil will not grow. You need, to deep spa4e, add peat moss, rotten leaves, rott~d manure will prove beneficial. Sand is always good to add to soil , it helps keep the soil moist
3. Lack of adequate drainage
4. Lack of sufficient fertility
5. Lack of sufficient sunlight
6. Lack of adequate moisture
7. Plant diseases and insects