



## GENERAL INFORMATION: **FLOWERS IN THE GARDEN**

*Flowers may not be the first thing on your mind as you're planning and planting your vegetable garden. But flowers offer some very real benefits, even beyond their beauty. Here are some favorite varieties and a few reasons to consider adding them to your containers or beds.*

### **BENEFICIAL FLOWERS**

Flowers add aesthetic beauty to the garden, and they have several practical uses as well.

Flowers draw beneficial insects, which pollinate vegetables and fruits and help keep garden pests levels under control. While most beneficial insects, in their larval form, eat insect pests, the adults subsist on nectar and pollen from flowers. Beneficial insects may visit your garden even without a long term food source, but a diverse offering of flowers will encourage them to make their home there. It's ideal to encourage beneficial insects to take up residence in your garden, to provide an optimal balance of "good" and "bad" insects. In a well-balanced garden ecosystem, you won't notice many pest problems because the beneficial insects will keep them to a minimum.



DILL BLOOMS IN A SCHOOL GARDEN

Some flowers are thought to repel animal pests. Traditionally, marigolds, with their spicy floral aroma, are planted throughout the garden to dissuade rabbits and other small pests from entering the garden. Flowers in the onion family, like any kind of allium, are distasteful to deer and may help keep them away.

Many flower varieties are edible. While it may seem a bit odd to chow down on some buds and



STRAWFLOWERS AND ZINNIA DRAW POLLINATORS TO THIS VEGETABLE GARDEN

blossoms, consider the fact that artichokes, broccoli, and cauliflower are actually flowers! When harvesting flowers for consumption, please make sure that the variety is, in fact, edible. Also, eat only flowers grown in a chemical-free garden. Varieties like violas, calendula, and nasturtiums make great garnishes or additions to salads. Additionally, most herb flowers are edible and tasty.

And finally, flowers can be cut for bouquets. Often, light pruning will encourage flowers to develop more blooms. So, add a flower bouquet to your harvesting list, and brighten up a room or a friend or neighbor's day.

### **INCORPORATING FLOWERS**

While beds of flowers are beautiful, if you're short on space, it's not necessary to plan a separate spot for flowers. Simply plant them at the base of trellised crops like tomatoes or pole beans, or tuck them into the edges of beds, where they will get some sun and a little space. Any flowers can work in the vegetable garden, though fairly short annuals tend to work best, if they will be planted in the vegetable beds. Any annuals can work, and perennials make great additions to borders or shady areas where vegetables won't grow.



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Many varieties can be direct seeded (check on seed packets or in seed catalogs to determine when to plant). Other varieties work best when transplanted, so grow your own indoors or purchase them as seedlings. In addition, most herbs, like basil, cilantro, dill, sage, and thyme, flower at some point in the season, and are wildly attractive to beneficial insects. Blooming herbs also make beautiful additions to bouquets!

Here's a short list of some flower varieties that tend to work well in the vegetable garden:



FLOWERS ENHANCE THE GARDEN IN MANY WAYS

<i>Flower Name</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Annual or Perennial</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Colors</i>
BACHELOR'S BUTTONS	24 - 36"	A	MAY RESEED, EDIBLE	BLUE/PURPLE OR PINK
CALENDULA	18 - 24"	A	MAY RESEED, EDIBLE	YELLOW, ORANGE
CELOSIA	10 - 46"	A	MAY RESEED, HEIGHT DEPENDS ON VARIETY	PINK, RED, YELLOW
COLUMBINE	18 - 30"	P		WHITE WITH BLUE, PINK, OR PURPLE; RED/YELLOW
COSMOS	36 - 60"	A	MAY RESEED	PINK, RED, WHITE
ECHINACEA (CONEFLOWER)	24 - 40"	P		TYPICALLY PINK, CAN BE RED, ORANGE, YELLOW
FORGET-ME-NOT	6 - 12"	P		TYPICALLY BLUE, CAN BE WHITE OR PINK
MARIGOLD	8 - 30"	A		RED, YELLOW, ORANGE
NASTURTIUM	12 - 16"	A	MAY RESEED, EDIBLE	RED, YELLOW, ORANGE, CREAM
PHLOX (ANNUAL)	6 - 8"	A		RED, PINK, PURPLE, WHITE
POPPY (CA)	8 - 12"	A	MAY RESEED	ORANGE
RUDBEKIA (BLACK-EYED SUSAN, ANNUAL)	24"	P		YELLOW, ORANGE, RED
SALVIA	12 - 18"	A		PURPLE, PINK, WHITE
SNAPDRAGON	30 - 36"	A		RED, PINK, WHITE, YELLOW, ORANGE
STATICE	24 - 36"	A		PURPLE, PINK, WHITE
STRAWFLOWER	14 - 40"	A		RED, ORANGE, YELLOW, PINK
SUNFLOWER	2 - 12'	A	MAY RESEED	YELLOW, ORANGE, REDDISH BROWN, CREAM
SWEET ALYSSUM	4"	A		WHITE, PINK, PURPLE
VIOLA	6 - 9"	A	MAY RESEED, EDIBLE	RED, BLUE, PURPLE, YELLOW, ORANGE
YARROW	12 - 24"	P		PINK, RED, PURPLE, ORANGE
ZINNIA	9 - 42"	A	HEIGHT DEPEND ON VARIETY	RED, PURPLE, PINK, GREEN, WHITE, ORANGE, YELLOW