— EXPERT TIPS —

How to Plant an Annual

Presented by the Nursery Department of Gasper Garden Center

— GASPER CAN HELP —

Brighten Any Outdoor Space With Colorful Annuals

The varieties are endless. Here are a few.

Ageratum

Alyssum

Marguerite Daisy

Begonia

Celosia

Cleome

Lobelia

Marigold

Nicotiana

Petunia

Phlox

Portulaca

Salvia

Snapdragons

Verbena

Zinnia

What Are Annuals?

Plants classed as *annuals* are those which complete their life cycle within one year, or are not winter hardy. Annuals are some of our most useful garden flowers. With a rainbow of available color choices, an almost endless supply of forms and sizes, and the ability to bloom the entire growing season, annuals have a place in any garden.

Best Time to Plant

If at all possible, plant in early morning, early evening, or on a cloudy day. Avoid planting during the hottest part of the day. This protects newly planted annuals from having sun stress as they're settling into their new environment. If you choose to tackle planting chores in the evening, you will give plants the overnight period to adjust to their new surroundings.

Dig with a Garden Trowel

The best tool to prepare a hole for planting is a sturdy 6-inch garden trowel. The curved sides on a garden trowel blade allow it to hold dirt, and the pointed end is good for digging. If there is mulch in the bed, push the mulch aside. Dig out a planting hole 1½–2 times as deep and 3 times the size of the container of your annual. Place the removed soil inside a bucket.

Separate the Plant and Pot

If the plant is dry, add some water but avoid making the soil soggy. Tap the container a few times on the side and bottom with your trowel. Invert the container and lightly squeeze the container like toothpaste while holding the plant at the base and the plant should fall into your hand unharmed. If the roots appear dense and "pot-bound," lightly pull them apart with your fingers before planting.

Mix the Soil

Mix a good compost like Bumper Crop Organic Soil Builder with the removed soil you placed in a bucket earlier. Use a ratio of 1 part Bumper Crop Organic Soil Builder to 2 parts removed soil. Mix in 4 heaping tablespoons of fertilizer per 1 gallon of soil. Use an organic probiotic fertilizer like Dr. Earth Rose and Flower Food. Mix the soil thoroughly inside the bucket.

Place the Annual

Place enough of your soil mixture from the bucket into the hole so that when you gently place the annual into the hole, the top of the roots are slightly above grade. Finish placing your soil mixture around the roots and press the soil slightly. Be sure not to place soil against the stem of your plant as this can cause stem rot.

Fertilize

Flowering plants have a special need for phosphorus and potassium to realize their blooming potential. The combination of Dr. Earth Rose and Flower Food and Bumper Crop Organic Soil Builder will provide these nutrients and encourage blooms on plants. Continue to fertilize by sprinklng a teaspoon of Dr. Earth fertilizer around the base of the plant. Repeat fertilizing every other month.

Watering

When all of your annuals are planted, water them with a gentle spray. This will water the plants without disturbing them. If you notice the next day that the soil has settled and exposed some of the roots, add more soil around the roots. Annuals tend to have shallow root systems so you may need to check them for dryness more frequently than other types of plants.

Continued Care

Your annuals will need daily water for about a week to be established, then water as necessary. Many annuals want water daily, where others can skip a day or two. The water needs of your annuals vary with the weather, the season, and sun exposure. You must make appropriate adjustments as the weather changes.

Unexpected Frost

Freezing weather kills or severely damages most annuals. If an early frost is forecast for your area there are a few things you can do to protect your annuals. You can cover the annuals with light-weight sheets or burlap; add 2-inches of mulch to your flower bed; or water your plants a day before you expect the frost since wet soil retains more heat than dry soil. Ultimately all annuals die with consistent low temperatures and will need to be removed for the cold weather season.

Keep Annuals Blooming

Keep the plants growing steadily throughout the season by watering regularly, feeding on schedule, and deadheading spent flowers. Deadheading keeps blooms coming all season long. Simply cut off the flower stem just below the spent blossom before the plant begins seed formation.

Gasper Can Help

If you are not sure about how to take good care of your annuals, or if you have questions, you can ask one of the many knowledgeable, expert horticulturists at Gasper Garden Center.

About Gasper

GASPER LANDSCAPES

Outdoor Living Perfected

Here at Gasper Landscape Design & Construction, we are proudly celebrating our 30th year anniversary. As the area's premier design-build company, our award-winning team of sales designers, landscape designers and architects, seasoned craftsmen, carpenters, masons and horticulturalist have the ability to take on any size landscape, hardscape or carpentry project. We will guide you through the entire design process, from your initial consultation to your project's completion. We hope that you take a minute to look through our website, featured projects, and online project portfolio. We are very proud of our work and what our many satisfied customers have to say about the Gasper experience. Contact us today to discuss how Gasper can help you with your next project.

GASPER HOME & GARDEN SHOWPLACE

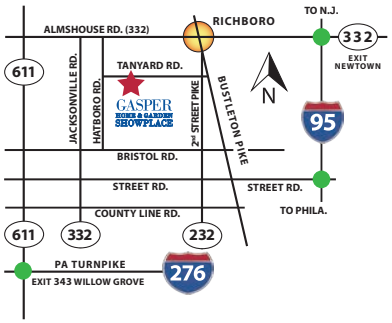
Delaware Valley's Finest Garden Center Destination

Gasper's 6-acre nursery and greenhouse offers landscape products, pond supplies, gardening accessories, outdoor furniture, pottery, unique gifts and seasonal home decor that truly define us as a one-stop-garden-shop. Our retail center is open year-round and staffed with gardening, pond care, furniture, and hardscape experts to assist you with all of your landscaping needs. We also offer free informational seminars and Do-It-Yourself workshops throughout the year and celebrate the changing seasons with family-fun, kid-friendly events. Come and see why Gasper has been awarded the "Best of Bucks" award for over 10 years.

WORLD-CLASS SERVICE & HIGH-QUALITY PRODUCTS

A Tradition Built By a Family's Love of Landscaping

For over 30 years, the Gasper family has been bringing their love of landscaping, gardening and stellar customer service to the Delaware Valley. Bob, Paula, Dana and Bobby pride themselves in not only their love of the business, but their accomplishments in becoming an award-winning and widely praised full-service design and build landscape company and garden center. On behalf of the Gasper family and entire staff, we welcome you to discover the Gasper difference and see for yourself why we have earned the distinction of being Bucks County's finest landscape company and destination garden center.



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