

LOOKING AFTER YOUR PLANTS

- Keep bedding plants blooming over a long period by picking off any dead blooms to encourage new flower buds.
- Feed every one or two weeks with a liquid fertiliser.
- Keep the area between the plants free from weeds as they will steal nutrients and water and may smother the plants.
- Hanging baskets may require watering more than once a day, especially during hot weather.
- If bedding plants become infected with greenfly, spray with an insecticide, preferably on a windless evening. Ask your garden centre or nursery for advice.
- Slugs and snails can be controlled with one of the many remedies available at your local garden centre or nursery.

TIME-SAVING TIPS:

- Spread a 5cm mulch of organic matter such as compost or chipped bark between the plants to help retain water in the soil.
- Water bedding plants in the evening to allow the plants and soil to absorb it before the summer sun burns it off.



BEDDING IN WINTER

Plants for summer colour usually die after the first frosts. Dig them up as soon as this happens and, if you have a compost heap, recycle them! Many plants can then be used that will look good during autumn and winter and provide colour on duller days. Try *Myosotis* (forget-me-not), ornamental cabbage, pansy, polyanthus, primula, viola or wallflower.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Fork
- Trowel
- Hoe
- Watering can
- Slug bait
- Liquid fertiliser
- Bonemeal (if planting in autumn/winter)
- Growmore (planting in spring/summer)
- Organic matter (mushroom/potting/garden compost, well-rotted manure)
- Chipped bark
- Trays/pots of bedding plants

For more information:
www.rhs.org.uk
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www.plantforlife.info

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- Tel: **0118 930 3132** or visit www.the-hta.org.uk
- HTA Specialist Groups – British Bedding and Pot Plant Association (BBPA) www.thebbpa.org.uk
- PlantforLife – visit www.plantforlife.info



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- Call **0845 130 4646** or visit www.rhs.org.uk



THE EASY GUIDE TO BEDDING PLANTS



WHERE DO I START?

For instant seasonal colour, flowering bedding plants are the answer! They are useful for filling in gaps between plants and shrubs that aren't fully grown, for using in containers or for planting up a whole bed for immediate effect. They can also be planted in hanging baskets, window boxes and troughs. Although they are short lived (lasting one season only) they grow fast and provide excellent value for money.

Bedding plants are ideal for sunny or lightly shaded but relatively sheltered areas. The municipal style of growing them in straight lines is best avoided in a garden - so plant them in large drifts or clumps to create impressive splashes of colour.

Many bedding plants can be grown easily from seed or are available cheaply as young plants from garden centres and nurseries. Bedding plants are available for spring, summer or early autumn colour, which will transform an otherwise dull border in a very short period of time.

HOW TO PLANT THEM

PREPARATION & PLANTING TIME: 30 MINS

- Don't plant when it's too hot and water the new plants thoroughly while still in their pots.
- Make sure the planting area is free from weeds. Fork over or hoe the area thoroughly, ensuring you don't disturb any nearby plants.
- Dig a hole bigger than the roots of the plant and water the hole. Tap the plant out of its pot or tray, disturbing the roots as little as possible. Gently push into the hole and firm the surrounding soil. Repeat with the other plants.
- Place tall plants to the rear and compact edging plants at the front. Don't overcrowd the plants.
- Some bedding plants come in pots made from peat which should be planted as well because the roots grow through them.
- After planting, sprinkle a general fertiliser such as Growmore lightly around plants and water well.
- Bedding plants grown in flower-pots, containers, hanging baskets and well-mounted pots, should be filled with potting compost mixed with water-retentive gels and slow-release fertiliser pellets. For more details see our leaflet *Hanging Baskets & Containers*.



CHOOSING YOUR PLANTS

First decide the colour schemes and plant combinations that you want to achieve. You will need to consider the area that you are trying to fill; think about whether you want to create instant effective patches of vibrant colour or a whole bed. You also need to consider how big the plants will grow and arrange your pattern accordingly. If you're going to put lots of 'hot' colours together like yellows, reds and oranges, you might like to include a lot of white in the mix.

When buying plants in the garden centre or nursery, choose plants that are bushy and healthy. Avoid any plants that look droopy or withered or that have dry compost.

SUMMER COLOUR

Here are a few varieties that should normally be planted when the danger of frost has passed, usually from the end of May:

AGERATUM (floss flower) - fluffy, powder-blue flowers ideal for edging and containers. 30cm

ANTIRRHINUM (snapdragon) (pictured right) - a wonderful range of trumpet-like flowers in soft, pastel hues, including shell pink, golden yellow, apricot, rose and peach. They form a long-flowering cloud of summer colour for bedding and containers. 40cm

BEDDING DAHLIA - perfect for bedding and container growing, dwarf dahlias often come in mixtures of bright, starry flowers in shades of red, rose, pink, orange, yellow and white. Lift the tubers in autumn, once frost has blackened the foliage, and store over winter in a frost-free place. 45cm

BEGONIA SEMPERFLORENS - flowers all summer from June-Oct with red, white and pink flowers in profusion. 15-25cm

BRACHYCOME (swan river daisy) - daisy flowers in shades of white, blue and violet, each with a striking black or yellow centre. Flowers all summer and very effective in containers and hanging baskets. Best in full sun. 25-30cm

BROMPTON STOCK - clusters of sweetly scented spring flowers in shades of white, pink and mauve. Ideal for a sunny border. 45cm



CALLISTEPHUS (aster) - huge range of colours including yellows, whites, blues, pinks and purples and flower shapes. Best for bedding displays in borders. 60cm

CLARKIA - lilac-purple flowers, best sown in groups to achieve a dramatic display. 40cm

COSMOS (pictured above) - always delightful in a flower border with large blooms in velvety rose-pinks, reds and pure white, and attractive ferny foliage. Best as a border filler or for large pots. 60cm

FUCHSIA - flowers July-early Oct in white, pink, red and purple, and includes bush and trailing types. 30-60cm

IMPATIENS (busy Lizzie) - these plants provide a great splash of colour in baskets and containers, or planted en masse in the border. The white, pink and red flowers keep going until the first frost and do best in part shade. 25cm

LOBELIA - flowers from June-Oct in blue, red, white and mauve, and includes trailing and upright types. 15cm

MESEMBRYANTHEMUM (Livingstone daisy) - These vividly coloured flowers open with the sun and are an excellent spreading plant in borders. 8cm

MARIGOLD - orange and yellow flowers all summer. 15-30cm

NICOTIANA (tobacco plant) (pictured left) - red, pink, white, yellow and green fragrant flowers in June-Oct. 25-60cm

PANSY - summer- and winter-flowering varieties can be planted to give year-round colour in a huge range of shades. 15-25cm

PELARGONIUM (geranium) - these bedding geraniums come in many different flower colours and often scented leaves. 45cm

PETUNIA - fantastic colour range in every shade and hue, with striped, veined or double blooms on upright or trailing plants. They flower early in the season and give a superb garden performance especially when deadheaded regularly. They look great in all types of containers and baskets. 30cm

SALVIA SPLENDENS - these popular, compact, neat plants are one of the first bedding plants to bloom, creating a blaze of red for months. Effective planted in mass bedding displays, but can be overpowering in other situations. 40cm

VERBENA - very attractive summer bedding plants, with dark green leaves and delightful, rounded clusters of flowerheads in shades of white, yellow, orange, pink, red and blue. Ideal for containers, beds, border edging or window-boxes. 30cm.

VIOLA (pictured above left) - small pansy-like flowers in March-Oct in white, yellow, orange, pink, red, mauve and blue. 15-20cm

