

Heat tolerant plants and the Colours of Summer

For many years there was a perception that there were very few flowering plants that could be grown through the summer due to the high heat and humidity in Bermuda. Well, the days of the dry, dull and dormant summer garden are no more! With hybridization and observation of tolerant varieties there are many flowering plants now available at local nurseries that not only tolerate but thrive our hot, intense summer sun and high humidity.

Here are a just few suggestions for bright colourful summer flower beds, containers and baskets.

Low growing ornamentals (under 2 feet)

MEXICAN HEATHER: a small shrub which has purple, lavender or white coloured flowers and fine foliage.

BLUE DAZE: A dense, rounded, plant accented with a profusion of clear blue flowers.

PENTAS: Dwarf varieties. Constant blooms all summer and rarely without a flower in the cooler months.

DUSTY MILLER: An attractive foliage plant that has grey feathery foliage. Used for accent planting.

LANTANA: Few plants combine constant flowering, heat tolerance and ease of care. Look for low growing varieties like New Gold, Athens Rose and Tropical Fruit which has vividly variegated foliage and flowers that open yellow but turn a fantastic, fruity pink bicolor.

Tall growing ornamentals (over 2 feet)

AMARANTHUS: Bold blazing red or a profusion of red, yellow and green clusters of foliage on 36" stems.

SALVIA GREGLII: Hardy shrub, long flowering season, pink, purple, cream, red and rose.

PLUMBAGO: A shrub that produces a small sticky lilac coloured blooms. White or blue flowers.

ANGELONIA: Distinct for their "snapdragon like" flowers

PENTAS: Tall growing varieties are available.

DAY LILIES: All gardens should include at least one to add that exotic touch.

Annual Bedding Plants

PORTULACA: The most heat tolerant bedding plant. Ground hugging wide spreading succulent leaves covered by bright silky saucer shaped flowers. Ideal in beds, borders and hanging baskets.

COSMOS: Good as cut flower for decoration.

MARIGOLD: A gardeners favourite in variations of yellow and orange and gold.

ZINNIA: Daisy like heads in bold bright colours.

VINCA: Also known as Periwinkle. Upright and trailing varieties are available in a wide colour choice.

CELOSIA: Bright coloured plumes or cocks comb flowers.

GAZANIA: Daisy like flowers, good for mass plantings, edging, ground cover containers.

SUPATUNIA: A must for summer hanging baskets and containers.

PURSLANE: Cousin to Portulaca, and equally as versatile.

BEGONIAS: Bedding varieties in red, white or pink. A wise choice for low maintenance.

Information supplied by Aberfeldy Nurseries

Helpful Hints

- Summer bedding plants now come in a variety of heights, textures and colours. Use them in conjunction with herbaceous woody ornamental plants or the popular succulents for a colourful and interesting display all season long.

- The term "**full sun**" often used to label bedding plants denotes "at least 6 hours a day of exposure to the direct sun."

- Before planting it is preferable to enhance your soil by adding organic matter such as a combination of Aberfeldy Nursery mix and Black Kow composted cow manure mixed into the top few inches of your garden.

- For **hanging baskets** and **containers** there are a selection of growing mixes on the market to choose from: i.e. Miracle-Gro potting mix, Fafard professional potting mix, Aberfeldy Nursery mix.

- Consider adding "**Soil Moist**" water retaining polymers to your containers and hanging baskets to reduce the frequency of plant waterings.

- Use a well balanced **fertilizer** once a week for optimum plant growth and flower production.

