



CARING FOR ANNUALS

Annual: Any herbaceous plant that grows and flowers in one season, generally killed by frost.

Planting annuals in a garden involves digging and mixing organic matter such as composted cow manure or peat moss into the top 6 - 8" of soil. Add a balanced granular fertilizer, a slow release organic 4-6-4 according to bag recommendations. Rake smooth, removing large rocks, and any weeds, and your garden is ready to plant. Carefully remove the plants from their containers and loose the root ball with your fingers so the roots can reach into their new soil. Pinch back any flowers or buds and top growth to ½ the height. This may seem heartless, but it will encourage sturdy, bushier growth on the plant, and allow it to use energy rooting into the soil before expanding effort to flower. Have no fear; new buds will form in 5-10 days. After placing the plant into the hole, making sure its level with the surrounding soil, firm the soil around the roots, and water well. Check the soil daily for water. Water deeply, getting the water well down to the roots, a gentle trickle directly on the soil is much more beneficial than top spraying.

Planting annuals into hanging baskets or large patio containers is easy as well. Use a good packaged potting soil, don't try using garden soil alone, as it tends to be too heavy and will compact too tightly. Containers will tend to dry out quickly, so check them daily for water. Moisture retaining additives such as "Soil Moist" will enhance the water holding capacity of the soil. Mix this product into the soil just before planting.

As the flowers bloom and fade, you will need to "deadhead" your flowers. This requires you to remove spent flowers so energy is focused on forming new flowers rather than forming seeds.

Liquid fertilizers, mixed into your water periodically will help keep your plants vigorous and happy. Frequent watering of containers washes the nutrients away, and these need to be replenished. Formulations of chemical fertilizers such as 20-20-20, a general-purpose blend, are good for flowers and foliage, where as 15-30-15 will help plants concentrate on their bud formation. Organic liquid fertilizers such as liquid seaweed and fish emulsion work equally as well in maintaining vigor, without the chemical side effects.

Following these simple procedures will help keep your gardens and containers in top condition to enjoy for the summer season. Please feel free to call us with any questions. 802-325-3007. Thanks for choosing Mettowee Mill Garden Center & Landscaping for your landscaping and gardening needs.