

MESSENGER-INQUIRER



August 13, 2022

Fall Flowering Plants for the Landscape

Chrysanthemums, pansies, flowering kale, and flowering cabbage are beautiful to enjoy in the fall. They perform well under cool night temperatures and tolerate a light frost. Planning ahead provides the time to remove older worn-out annuals and to decorate for fall. Growing them in pots allows the opportunity to bring them closer to your door or patio to enjoy.

Chrysanthemums offer a variety of colors and flower types. Numerous colors are available. The flower color ranges from yellow, white, orange-peach, maroon-red, bright orange, rose-pink, coral, purple, pink, lavender, bronze, and red. The period of bloom in your garden can be extended by planting several different varieties. Depending on the variety, chrysanthemums bloom from August to November.

Two flower forms of chrysanthemum are commonly available. One form is called single or daisy like, which has a single or double row of petals surrounding a central eye. The second is called decorative, which appears to be made up of all petals and does not have a distinctive eye. Sometimes you will see flowers with petals that look like tubes or petals that look like little spoons.

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When possible, purchase chrysanthemums with only a few flowers open. It is tempting to buy plants in full bloom, but plants with a few flowers open will provide a longer display of color than plants in full bloom.

Chrysanthemums should be planted in a well-drained, sunny location. They will rot quickly, especially in the winter, if the soil stays wet. In addition, some chrysanthemum cultivars are hardier than others. However, they are certainly worth growing for the fall color even though they may not return next year.

Another flower that is available for planting now is the pansy. Pansies are flowering annuals that make a colorful show in the garden. They are available in a wide variety of colors. The colors include red, orange, yellow, purple, white, blue, violet-blue, brick red, and rosy purple. The flowers may be all the same color or may have a different colored blotch in the center of the bloom. Flower size ranges from 1.5 to 3 inches across, depending on the cultivar.

Pansies perform best under cool temperatures. I have had pansies blooming in pots at my back door in December. An advantage of fall planted pansies is that they often overwinter and bloom again in late winter or early spring. Pansies planted in the fall are larger and stronger than those planted in the spring. As the heat of summer increases, many pansies begin to look scraggly and die.

Pansies are available as transplants during this time of year. It is best to plant them in full sun. Pansies should be planted by the end of September to give them time to establish a good root system before the soil temperature decreases.

Pansies can be planted in between summer annuals. When the summer annuals begin to fade, they can be removed and the next flowers are ready to make a show. If you are tired of summer annuals and ready for something different, remove the old annuals and plant pansies.

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Try pansies in containers to bring color to the patio, deck, window box, or porch for the fall. I have enjoyed pansies in a container next to my door. Since the pot is in a protected area to prevent the soil from freezing, my pansies have wintered over and bloomed again in late winter.

Flowering kale and flowering cabbage are unique, sun loving annuals. Depending on the variety, the heads may be 12 or more inches across. The height of the plants ranges from 12 to 24 inches. The color of the leaves inside the head may be white or red surrounded by light or dark green leaves. As the temperature becomes cooler, the center leaves intensify in color.

Kale varieties may have feather-like leaves that are finely cut or deeply notched, finely ruffled leaf edges, or slightly waved edges. The flowering cabbage may have smooth-edged leaves.

Flowering kale and cabbage are available as transplants for your garden. You may need to watch for larvae feeding on the leaves. Products containing *bacillus thuringiensis* will manage many of the damaging larvae when they are small.

A landscaping idea with chrysanthemums, pansies, or flowering kale and cabbage is to plant them in groups. A group of the same plant makes a bigger impact of color in the landscape than single plants spread throughout the garden.

For hardy chrysanthemums and flowering kale and cabbage, three to five plants or more, depending on their size, can be grouped for a good show. The suggested spacing between these plants in a group is 18 inches.

For pansies, a nice show is made when eight or more plants are grouped together. Space pansy plants 8 to 12 inches apart in the group.

For more information about these plants, contact the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service or annette.heisdorffer@uky.edu.

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Annette's Tips:

To help control fruit flies, all potential breeding areas (ripening fruits or vegetables) must be located, cleaned, and/or eliminated. Then, construct a trap by placing a paper funnel, rolled from a sheet of paper, into a jar which is baited with a few ounces of cider vinegar or slice of banana.

Ongoing Event:

The Owensboro Regional Farmers' Market is open on Tuesdays from 8:00 a.m. to noon, on Thursdays from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to noon at the corner of Triplett Street and Parrish Avenue at 1205 Triplett.

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