

COLOR ROTATION

In Annual Flower Beds

"Colorscaping" — or creating dazzling displays of annuals with attractive flowers or foliage—has become an integral part of the commercial landscape.

Colorscapes that provide seasonal color are a good way to draw attention to the property.

Two to six rotations of plants during a season provide the longest and best display. The length of the growing season and visual impact desired from flower beds determine how many rotations to make during one season.

Beds near entrances and around signs require more rotations because of their high visibility. Parking lots and areas with less visibility require as little as one or two plantings. For many properties, three rotations can be used. In the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast, the season begins with spring-flowering bulbs, which were planted the previous fall. The favorite spring bulb is the tulip.

Shortly after spring bulbs have finished flowering, they should be removed from the bed in preparation for the second rotation, summer annual installation. Daffodils can be dug and moved to other places on the property, but tulips do not reliably perform well the second year and should be discarded. Summer annuals such as begonias, impatiens and periwinkle perform well through the summer if they are properly watered and fertilized. Proper watering and fertilization help ensure that plants receive essential nutrients to keep them vigorous and strong. Some annuals need pinching back, deheading and/or pesticide treatments to keep them looking their best. Such plant maintenance helps ensure that your colorscape remains healthy.

The third rotation should be planted in mid- to late August. Plants that perform well in cooler weather, such as chrysanthemum, marigolds and flowering cabbage or kale,

Grounds & Facility Expo

A Smashing Success!!

The Green Industry gathered this past August 3 and 4 for the annual Grounds & Facility Expo at Resurrection Cemetery in Mendota Heights to view the very latest in grounds maintenance equipment and supplies.

The two-day event not only included vendor displays but also featured tree climbing exhibitions, chainsaw art, golf clinics and an answer booth manned by the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Attendance, though hampered by heat on the first day and cool and misty weather on day two, was larger than expected by expo organizers. As MGCSA President Joe Moris said, "I was impressed... nicely set up, easy access... it was great!"

This event was the first effort of the Minnesota Turf & Grounds Foundation to host an industry-wide event with sponsorship and direction provided by the Minnesota Park Supervisor's Association.

are typically used. Sometimes only part of the flower bed is replaced with new plants.

Pansies can also be attractive in the fall, especially in the South. Pansies can be planted in the Southeast and Southwest from Oct. 1 to Oct. 15. They are popular in colorscaping in southern states but have not been used much in northern states.

Most northern colorscapers plant pansies in the spring instead of fall because of concerns of winter plant mortality. Grounds managers at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, however, have been successful with fall-planted pansies (Sept. 15 to Oct. 1).

After these plants have finished flowering, spring-flowering bulbs can be planted. Bulbs can be planted as late as soil can be worked.

When designing a colorscape, keep in mind that large groupings of color are best. A kaleidoscope mixture, while more typical of nature, does not provide a strong focal point for the viewer.

Using several rotations can help ensure that flower beds retain high visual impact throughout the growing season. Careful selection and planting, as well as proper care, of annual plants can help your grounds remain vibrantly colorful from early spring to late fall.

—Davey Groundskeeper Care



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