



# Ten Keys:

## *To Successful Summer Annuals*

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You know turf grass, but you might not be as confident with annual planting beds. Your members expect there to be color and drama around the club house and tee boxes as well as the swimming pool, tennis courts and dining areas. Here are some keys to successful use of annuals on golf courses.

### **10 Keys to Successful Golf Course Annuals**

1. Get member input up front. A small committee of members who can help prioritize planting plans and give the thumbs or limited comments and feedback to the planting beds can prevent headaches later on.
2. Use bold colors and large swaths of plants – the further a bed is from viewing points the bigger each sweep of plants should be and the bolder the color should be. Especially avoid the color blue, unless you are using a lighter color behind for contrast.
3. Rely on “tried and true” annuals for the bulk of your beds – we use a lot of brightly mixed impatiens and bedding begonias in the shade. Plants like zinnias, salvias, marigolds, and celosias in the sun. These plants are also a lot cheaper per flat - making your budget go further.
4. Make high impact areas more dramatic – the front of the club house, outside doors and main windows and in pots and planters. This is where the latest and greatest cultivars and most striking combinations are worth the extra cost.
5. Plant early. It will take at least three weeks for an annual bed to take off, so you want to get the beds in as soon as possible. We plan for the second or third week of May – have blankets ready if there is a late frost.
6. Prep beds with compost and slow-release fertilizer – compost adds organic matter, conditions the soil and slightly lowers the pH.
7. Fertilize every other week with MiracleGro or similar fertilizer.
8. Check soil moisture often and adjust irrigation – it is easy to lose plant material when the irrigation has not been optimized for the plant material. On golf courses it is probably more likely to be too wet than too dry if it is irrigated.
9. Protect from deer and rabbits immediately after planting with spray or other deterrent. Reapply often.
10. Weed and pinch weekly. Annual beds don’t take a lot of maintenance – doing it weekly will actually decrease maintenance in the end. Have a team go through and spot weed, monitor the plants, and prune back each week. Even with fairly extensive plantings we complete this in one day with two people. One week is weeding and pruning; the next week is fertilizing with a little weeding