

## FLOWERING ANNUALS BRIGHTEN COURSE PLANTINGS

Everything that grows on a golf course is not necessarily green. Flowering plants add a bright touch to the clubhouse and course areas, and some superintendents, like GCSAA Vice President Michael R. Bavier, CGCS, use potted flowers as tee markers on ladies' days.

Two of the most popular flowering annuals in the United States are zinnias and marigolds. Unlike the ever-popular petunias and snap-dragons, which are usually transplanted as bedding plants, marigolds and zinnias can easily be grown from seed. Michigan State University floriculture specialist Lowell Ewart points out that they are quick to flower and persistent, providing bright splashes of color until frost.

"One of the best things about these plants is that they need almost no care," Ewart says. "Toss the seeds on the ground, kick some dirt over them, give them a little water and watch them grow."

Both marigolds and zinnias come in a wide range of flower types and flower and plant sizes. Varieties are available that can be used as tall hedges or screens, as intermediate plantings and as low-growing borders. The range of flower color in zinnias goes from white and cream through pinks and reds, yellows and oranges. There are even some green-flowered varieties. Marigolds come in various shades of yellow, orange, gold, rust and dark red. Variegated flowers are available in both.

Zinnias and marigolds, like most flowering annuals, do best in a brightly sunlit area. For shade, Ewart recommends coleus, begonias and impatiens. Though these can be grown from seed started indoors, he advises that homeowners buy transplants to set out after the danger of frost is past. The multicolored foliage of coleus and the white, pink, salmon, red and variegated blossoms of impatiens provide color to brighten a shady corner. He notes that the newer varieties of impatiens that have variegated foliage need more sun than the standard shade-loving varieties.

A sunbaked spot where many flowers would fail in midsummer is ideal for portulaca, or moss rose. This ground-hugging annual can be seeded direct in early spring or set in May as transplants. It quickly covers an area with blossoms in a rainbow of colors.

Alyssum is another popular flowering plant. Compact and low growing, it is often used as a border plant. Like portulaca, it can be seeded into the garden or planted as transplants. It grows best in full sun, where it remains covered with tiny white, rose-pink or purple flowers from early summer through frost.

For dry, sunny areas with poor soil, consider nasturtiums. White, red, yellow, salmon and variegated flowers appear about six weeks after sowing and continue until frost. Climbing, semitrailing and upright varieties are available.

For foundation plantings or a low, decorative hedge, try four o'clocks. This old-fashioned plant gets its name from its habit of opening its flowers in late afternoon. It blooms all night, then closes up its blossoms in midmorning. It is easy to grow and very fragrant.

The best way to get good results with these and other annuals from seed is to follow the directions for planting and care on the seed packets and in the seed catalogs, Ewart advises. With good quality seed and a minimum of care, any of these plants should perform well.

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### The Thomas tips:

Train the operator to report missing parts on the equipment.

Observe and report general course conditions.

Projecting the need for replacement parts must be taught to your mechanic.

Teach the importance of listening for sounds of impending problems.

Educate employees with a planned rainy day program.

Never expect a good performance from poor instruction to workers.

Tell the operator to report immediately if equipment is damaging turf or evidence of vandalism appears.

Insist that equipment is kept clean.



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