

## “Flowers, Flowers & Flowers”

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A golf course superintendent and a greenhouse grower have a lot in common. First, both must deal with the growth of healthy plants; in your case, it's the establishment and maintenance of healthy grass plants. In the greenhouse industry, it's the establishment and maintenance of healthy flowering plants. The fruits of our labor are enjoyed by consumers during their leisure time, and are paid for out of expendable income. But the most important similarity between our two industries would be the sense of well being the customer derives from our endeavors! Since our two industries have so many similarities, let's explore how we might work more closely together for even greater success.

### WHY USE ANNUALS?

Annuals should be included in any plan to develop or beautify a golf course. Proper selection of both cultivars and varieties assures there will be no maintenance surprises. Annuals are exciting; many perennials, flowering bushes and bulb crops have a short color season, sometimes they can look thin and sparse when they're not in bloom; annuals, properly selected for the micro climate, will offer continuous living vibrant color. However, should seasonal “changeouts” be desired, they're quick and easy! Since any competent grower can produce flowering annuals, there's a preponderance of top quality annuals available from early spring all the way through the growing season.

If you are responsible for acquiring flowering annuals for your golfscape, perhaps you have visited a greenhouse and selected plant material from the varieties offered; in most cases, the result is satisfactory. But remember, most annuals presented for sale are selected by growers on the basis of greenhouse performance and profitability; in addition, crops must already be flowering in the “retail” environment for impulse purchasing by consumers. The ideal way to get good plant material is to “plan ahead”. Annuals for the golfscape should be prescribed in a comprehensive plan outlining their use throughout the golf course. This plan should be completed early enough so growers can be lined up as suppliers **before** the sowing and growing season commences. If it's too late, do a plan **now** for the following season ... you'll be ahead of the game! If you would like professional help with your plan, contact me at 1-800-323-7253. By custom ordering your flowering annuals early in the season,

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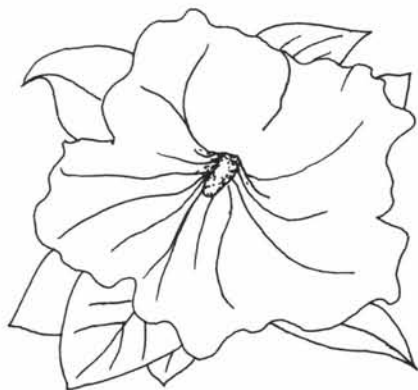
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# FLOWERS



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you can prescribe real garden performers! The key to any successful annual landscaping program is the **communication between you and the grower!**

After converting flower beds to annuals, many golf course superintendents discovered how flexible the use of annuals can be; beds can be renovated quickly even during peak play periods. Complete changes from one season to the next are simple. Most superintendents have found that planting an annual garden can be accomplished with existing labor. Since most annuals are weed mat and mulch tolerant, you can control weeds and minimize watering by the use of either; all these benefits add up to a low cost for annual beds.

Since there is a wide range of flowering annuals available, flowers can be selected to thrive in extremes of soil, temperature, moisture and maintenance conditions. Each year your plan for the usage of annuals in the golfscape is refined and many problem areas become gardens; even problem areas which arise quickly can be renovated in a flash!

The use of flowering annuals offers you an improved course image ... and this improved image comes with minimum investment. The extra beauty annual gardens add to the golf course will remind golfers to respect the course, and enhance the golfing experience!

**HOW DO WE SELECT ANNUALS FOR THE GOLFSCAPE?**

Many times annuals are selected for use in the golfscape because of their "need to survive". Often, extremes of temperature, moisture, and land usage dictates what annuals can be used.

Some good examples of annuals that are excellent under hot conditions would be vinca (the Cooler series), Multiflora petunias (Primetime, Polo, and Carpet), and even the unusual F1 hybrid ornamental peppers (Aurora, Red Missile and Holiday Flames). There are literally hundreds of annuals which perform admirably under hot conditions.

Under cool conditions, plants such as pansies (Roc, Crystal Bowl and Crown), snapdragons (Floral Showers, Floral Carpet and Tahiti), salvia splendens (Hot Stuff, Top or Carabineri) and dianthus (Ideal, Parfait and Princess) all receive high marks. Some annuals, such as pansies, can extend the flowering season both early (March-April) and late (November-December).

Sometimes annuals are required to weather extremely wet soil conditions. In irrigated areas, annuals such as impatiens (Accent series, Super Elfin series, and Impulse series), fibrous rooted begonias (Varsity series, Rio series and Olympia series), Coleus (Wizard series, Kaleidoscope series, or fringed types), and even the more unusual Browallia (Bell series or Troll series) can be ideal. There are literally hundreds of flowering annuals which thrive under wet air and soil conditions!

Many areas of the golf course are subject to heavy mechanical and pedestrian abuse. Annuals can be selected with this prerequisite in mind; annuals such as Coleus, triploid Marigolds (Laguna or Red Seven Star), begonias which result from interspecific crosses (Avalanche or Southern Star), nicotiana (Domino, Nikki or Merlin) and popular daisy type flowers (Rudbeckia Goldilocks) can withstand the pressures of high volume course play. In addition, since annuals are quick and easy to plant ... if someone gets "carried away" (or the plants get carried away!), replacement is inexpensive and fast.

Annuals may be selected for the golfscape because of the design opportunities they offer; needs for different height, tex-

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ture and color can all dictate which annuals are selected to complete the golf course design.

Height requirements may be satisfied with annuals such as African marigolds; Inca series, Voyager series, and Discovery series are tall, intermediate and short (respectively). On the other hand, ground creepers (Carpet Vinca, Portulaca Sundial and Verbena Romance) may offer a stage for the display of taller annuals. Intermediate height annuals such as celosia (Century series, New Look series, and Castle series) may be used to complete the design effort.

An often ignored element in design work is texture; texture can add the rhythm or continuity to a landscape design if used properly. In a monochromatic (one color) display garden, Alyssum Blue Danube, Salvia Farinacia Renaissance, and Salvia Splendens Carabineri Blue could all be worked into a theme maintaining the same color but different texture arrangements. The use of monochromatic gardens has become an important design element as it makes a strong statement in a small space.

The most obvious design element for the use of flowering annuals in the golfscape would be that of color. Techniques such as picture framing, contrasting, and blending can all lend interest and utility to a golfscape design. Picture framing may be accomplished by running a solid border around a mix of petunias or impatiens. After all, what picture does not look better with a good mat and frame! Annuals such as fibrous rooted begonia Olympia White may be used to contrast with blood red Dianthus Ideal for a vivid contrast. Blending colors such as rose, coral and pink colors from both impatiens and petunia cultivars can offer a gentle staircase or "embossed" effect in the landscape design. No matter how you use color, one thing's for sure ... annuals have the ability to stop traffic at 55 miles an hour when used properly!

Many varieties may be selected for use in the golfscape because of their "changeout" capabilities. Rotating three or four annuals through a garden during a season is often successful in major focus areas. Beginning with cool crops in the early spring; pansies, snapdragons and dwarf celosia can offer excellent design possibilities; during the hot summertime, petunias, impatiens, vinca, and begonias will keep the same display garden looking fresh; for fall, a different range of cool crops may be selected ... garden mums, dianthus, or salvia splendens can round out a season of change for an important display garden.

We know that golf course superintendents represent some of the finest landscapers in the country; we also know that, through training and experience, you have learned much about the performance of trees, flowering bushes, perennials and annuals. But since there are well over 150 new cultivars (including color additions to existing cultivars) each year, it would be difficult for a golf course superintendent to be current in his analysis of flowering annuals. If you need help with your annual garden program, ask!

Remember, do a plan for the use of your annuals. Even if it is too late for this year, you can use your plan in working with a local grower next year! Keep it down the middle!