

# EXPOSED LOCATIONS REQUIRE HARDIER VARIETIES

By Gary A. Anderson, Chairman, Horticultural Industries Technologies Div., Agricultural Technical Institute, Ohio State University, Wooster, OH

The groundskeeper who desires to brighten the landscape with flowering plants often finds areas exposed to full sun and drying winds a special challenge. Newly constructed residential and public building sites are often without protection and shade. Bright sun and windy conditions work together to lower humidity around the plants and increase water loss from them. Windy conditions cause mechanical damage to delicate flower petals and foliage. However, selection and conditioning of annual and perennial plants can provide color for even these apparently harsh locations.

## Planting in exposed locations

Select dwarf varieties which generally withstand windy conditions better than taller varieties of the same species.

Set out larger, more developed plants that have been grown in large cell packs or singly. Smaller plants may dry out before they become established.

Avoid setting out spindling plants that will be slow to establish and which may suffer from mechanical damage due to wind.

Condition plants to outside environment before planting. Withhold water to firm plant tissue and prepare for water stress conditions.

A number of annual and perennial plants will perform well in windy and dry conditions. One of the most tolerant plants for bedding work is *Vinca* or Periwinkle. The glossy green foliage grows eight to 16 in. tall and fills in rapidly. Five-petaled pink, white, or rose blossoms are produced throughout the summer and fall, even when temperatures become very hot.

Wax begonias are colorful, compact plants that withstand windy conditions well. Bright sun may cause some damage to the foliage but this is often covered with a profusion of red, white or pink

blossoms and is therefore not conspicuous. There is very little maintenance with the plant and few insects and diseases attack it.

*Gazania*s grow well in hot, windy places. The brightly colored daisy-like flowers have distinctive dark around the center. Flowers rise six to 12 inches above the ground. Blossoms close in cloudy weather and at night.

## Perennials

Perennials bloom over a shorter period of time than annuals, but once established, will persist for many years. *Asclepias* or butterfly weed is a showy, brilliant orange perennial that will tolerate dry windy locations and poor, dry soil. It has almost no insect or disease problems and once established requires little attention. The plant is two to three feet tall and blooms for about two weeks in mid-summer. Another plant that sports a bright orange cluster of flowers two to three feet above the ground is Maltese Cross (*Lychnis*). Strong stems support flowers even during driving rains.

*Achillea* or yarrow will withstand drought in open, sunny locations. The flat golden heads are produced in midsummer, even if the plants are neglected. Wind passes through the fern-like foliage with little effect on the plant.

Other annuals and perennials listed in the chart have characteristics that make them good candidates for exposed planting. Nursery or seed catalogs and gardening books should be used to check out heights, blooming times and colors. When purchasing plants or seeds, pay attention to the attributes of the particular cultivar to make sure it is what you think you are getting. The introduction of many dwarf cultivars on the market has increased the choice of flowering plants for exposed locations.

**WTT**

## Plants Suitable for Exposed Locations

### Annuals

*Arctotis* (African Daisy)  
*Begonia* (Wax Begonia)  
*Catharanthus* (Vinca or Periwinkle)  
*Celosia*  
*Coreopsis* (Calliopsis)  
*Dimorphotheca* (Cape Marigold)  
*Eschscholzia* (California Poppy)  
*Gaillardia*  
*Gazania*  
*Gomphrena* (Globe Amaranth)  
*Helichrysum* (Strawflower)  
*Mesembryanthemum* (Livingston Daisy)  
*Pelargonium* (Geranium)  
*Portulacca* (Moss Rose)  
*Sanvitalia* (Creeping Zinnia)  
*Tagetes* (French Marigold)  
*Verbena*

### Perennials

*Achillea* (Yarrow)  
*Armeria* (Sea-Pink)  
*Artemisia*  
*Asclepias* (Butterfly Weed)  
*Aster* (Michaelmas Daisy)  
*Coreopsis*  
*Echinops* (Globe Thistle)  
*Gaillardia*  
*Hemerocallis* (Day Lily)  
*Kniphofia* (Red-Hot-Poker)  
*Liatris* (Gayfeather)  
*Lychnis* (Maltese Cross)  
*Monarda* (Beebalm)  
*Physostegia* (False Dragonhead)  
*Rudbeckia*  
*Sedum*  
*Veronica*