

PREPARING A NEW FLOWER BED

Flowering annuals are an important part of every day living to provide that sparkling splash of colour throughout the 12 months of the year. Though annuals are considered to be of high maintenance & water volume, if basic principles are followed in the make up of your garden, they can be very simply maintained. The following steps can also be utilised for planting in pots & containers.

SELECT YOUR SITE

- Start off small, and decide on your own design - formal or informal, colours, backdrop and even mood.
- Pick a location that is in full sun all day long, shady gardens can be spectacular but a sunnier position is better.
- Flat ground is best, a slight slope is also fine.
- Remove any existing grass or weeds including roots. This is essential. Smother area with newspaper topped with mulch/organic matter or use a herbicide. If you use a herbicide, read the label directions carefully, including when you can incorporate the soil.

MINIMISE WATER USAGE

With hard Australian soils it is important to add organic matter to improve water and nutrient holding, improve plant growth, and decrease garden maintenance. This can be done by:

- adding your own composted household waste.
- purchasing peat and well rotted manures.
- adding wetting agents to improve water efficiency.

MULCHING

Bare soil exposed to our harsh summer will lose moisture & nutrients at a rapid rate. A mulch buffer is required to hold this moisture in.

The benefits of mulching include:

- Retaining moisture
- Preventing soil erosion
- Discouraging weed growth
- Adding nutrition over time

For lower spreading plants, mulch to 50mm thick and with taller varieties to a 75mm thickness.

PLAN BEFORE PLANTING

Select the varieties to suit your garden. Not all varieties require the same water levels so it is important to group them according to their needs & achieve the design. Always check the ticket for any additional variety or planting requirements. Your local nursery can advise on the different requirements.

WATERING YOUR FLOWER BEDS

Low volume spray or soaker hoses are efficient ways of watering your beds. To avoid moisture loss through evaporation, water in the evenings or early mornings and always follow local council laws.

FERTILISING YOUR FLOWER BEDS

Annuals are quick growers so there is no need to force growth with a lot of fertilizer applications. This will only produce more lush vegetative growth which will require more water and is more prone to insect and disease attacks. If used in moderation, manures are a great addition as they release slowly over a period of time.

REMEMBER ALL FLOWERS WILL PERFORM BETTER IF THESE GUIDELINES ARE FOLLOWED. GOOD LUCK AND ENJOY.

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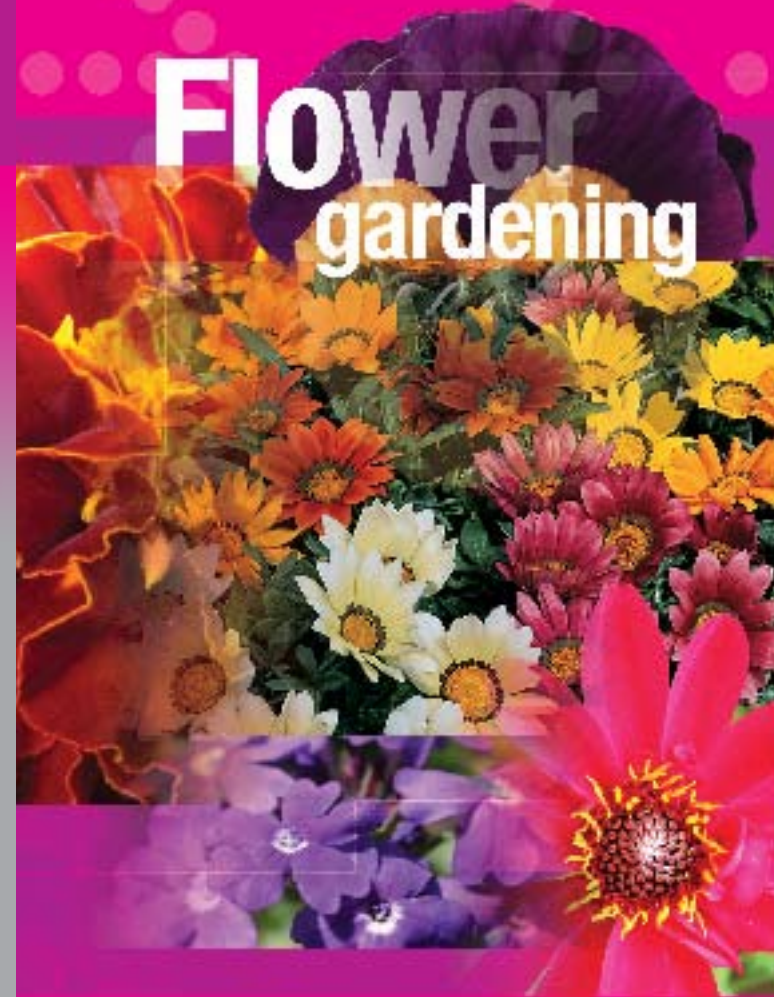


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Flower gardening



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