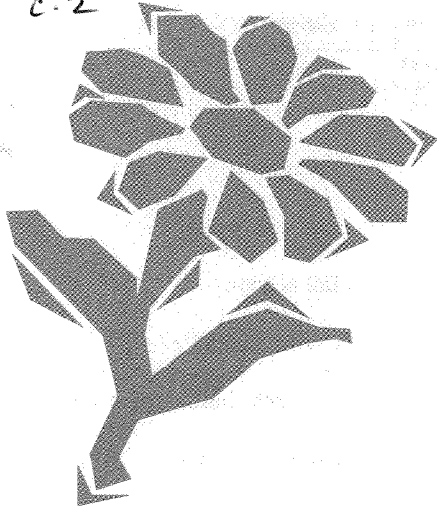


UCSU 20/6.22/7.231/1999

c.2



G A R D E N I N G



S E R I E S

# FLOWERS

COLORADO STATE PUBLICATIONS LIBRARY  
UCSU20/6.22/7.231/1999 c.2 local  
Feucht, James R./Xeriscaping : garden fl



3 1799 00026 3194

## Xeriscaping: Garden Flowers

no. 7.231

by J.R. Feucht<sup>1</sup>

### Quick Facts...

A xeriscape is a water-conserving landscape design.

Flowers add color to xeriscape yards and gardens.

Improve soils before planting most flowers.

Soil improvement is easier if only annual flowers are used for the first year or two.

Plant flowers according to site exposure.

Spring-flowering bulbs are drought-evaders and make good flowers for a xeriscape.

Garden flowers provide showy, colorful displays in a xeriscape garden. Xeriscape (zer-i-skape) is a water-conserving landscape. Annuals and perennials can be integrated with shrub borders and groups of trees, or they may be planted in their own beds along fences, walls, walks and patios.

### Soil Conditions

Before selecting garden flowers, check your soil. Most flowers do poorly in heavy clay, due to lack of oxygen to their roots. Sandy soils may have poor water-holding capacity and be low in available minerals. If either extreme is true in your yard, **do not plant perennial flowers the first year or two.**

Improve the soil with sphagnum peat, available in bales or bags at garden centers. Incorporate 1 cubic foot of sphagnum per 8 by 10 foot area to a depth of 9 inches. Plant only annuals so it will be easier to cultivate and incorporate additional organic matter in the fall, after the plants are killed by frost. Add more sphagnum each year until the soil is easily worked and does not compact. Perennial flowers may then be planted.

### Garden Exposure

Select plants that are compatible with the exposure. For north sides of structures or among shrubs, choose plants that tolerate less sun. For example, perennials for a shaded spot might include canterbury bells, primrose and violets. Such plants usually need cool, more consistently moist soils than most garden flowers. They can, nevertheless, be useful in the shaded parts of a xeriscape. Add organic mulches such as wood chips to reduce watering frequency.

### Bulbs

Most bulbs do best in full sun, but they must have well-drained soils. Spring-flowering bulbs are well-suited for xeriscape plantings because they are drought-evaders. That is, they grow in the cooler, more moist spring and fall seasons and lie dormant underground during the hot summer months.

Use tulips, grape hyacinths, hyacinths, daffodils and crocus for naturalizing a xeriscape. In fall, scatter bulbs in the areas you want them. Plant them where they land. For more information on bulbs, refer to fact sheet 7.410, *Fall-Planted Bulbs and Corms*, and 7.411, *Spring-Planted Bulbs, Corms and Roots*.

### Annuals

Almost all annuals commonly sold do well in xeriscape gardens with some soil preparation and no more than one hand-watering a week. For hot, dry exposures, the most reliable include marigolds, zinnias, cockscomb, sweet alyssum and bachelor's button. Where soils are shaded and cooler, use annuals such as lobelia, pansy and forget-me-not.

**Colorado**  
**State**  
University<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperative  
Extension

© Colorado State University  
Cooperative Extension. 2/99.  
[www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt](http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt)

**Table 1: Perennial plants for shady spots.**

Plant Name	Flower Color	Flowering Time	Height (ft)	Remarks
<i>Aconitum napellus</i> Monkshood	Purple	June-Sept.	3 to 4	Use in dense shade.
<i>Anchusa azurea</i> Anchusa (Italian bugloss)	Deep blue	June-July	3 to 5	Tall accent.
<i>Aquilegia</i> spp. Columbine	White, blue, pink, yellow	May-June	1 to 2	Use with shrubs.
<i>Campanula medium</i> Canterbury bells	Pink, purple, white	June-July	3	Tall accent.
<i>Campanula</i> spp. Harebell	Blue, white	June-Oct.	1	Useful edging.
<i>Dicentra spectabilis</i> Bleeding heart	Deep pink	April-June	1 1/2	Use with shrubs, north sides.
<i>Dictamnus</i> spp. Gas plant	White, pink	June-July	2 to 3	Use with shrubs.
<i>Iberis sempervirens</i> Candytuft	White	April-June	1	Foliage evergreen.
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> Cardinal flower	Bright red	July-Sept.	2	Use in dense shade.
<i>Physostegia virginiana</i> Dragonhead (false)	Lavender, white	Aug.-Sept.	3 to 3 1/2	Aggressive creeper.
<i>Primula</i> spp. Primrose	Yellow, red, blue	April-May	1/2	Showy spring flowers.
<i>Thermopsis divaricata</i> Golden banner, false lupine	Yellow	May	1 to 2	Aggressive creeper.
<i>Viola cornuta</i> Tufted pansy	Various	May-Sept.	1/2	Shade or sun.
<i>Viola odorata</i> Sweet violet	White, purple	April-May	1/2	Aggressive creeper.

**Table 2: Perennials for sunny spots.**

Plant Name	Flower Color	Flowering Time	Height (ft)	Remarks
* <i>Achillea</i> spp. Yarrow	Yellow, white, pink	July-Sept.	1 to 3	Adapts to very poor soils; fern-like, aromatic foliage.
* <i>Alcea rosea</i> Hollyhock	Various	June-Sept.	4 to 8	Tall accent; grows almost anywhere.
<i>Alyssum saxatile</i> Alyssum (golden)	Yellow	April	1	Reseed readily.
* <i>Armeria maritima</i> Thrift	Pink	May-Aug.	1	Grass-like foliage.
* <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> Butterfly weed	Orange	July-Aug.	1 to 1 1/2	Grows in poor soils; very deep-rooted.
<i>Aster novae-angliae</i> Aster (New England)	Purple, white	Sept.	3 to 5	Showy for fall.
*Cactus (various plant groups) Cactus	Various	May-Aug.	Various	Use in sandy soils.
* <i>Centaurea cyanus</i> Cornflower	Blue, white	May-Sept.	2	Border plant, cut flower.
<i>Chrysanthemum coccineum</i> Painted daisy	White, pink	May-July	2 to 3	Showy, cut flower.
<i>Chrysanthemum maximum</i> Shasta daisy	White	July-Aug.	2 to 2 1/2	Useful with shrubs.
* <i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i> Coreopsis	Yellow	June-Aug.	3	Easy to grow in most soils.
<i>Delphinium elatum</i> Delphinium	White, purple, blue	June-July	4 to 6	Tall accent; may need staking.
<i>Dianthus barbatus</i> Sweet William	White, pink, red	May	2	Aggressive biennial.
* <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> Purple coneflower	Yellow, purple	Aug.-Sept.	4 to 6	For tall background.
* <i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i> Sulphur flower	Yellow	May-June	1/2	Grows in poor soils.

**Table 2, continued: Perennials for sunny spots.**

Plant Name	Flower Color	Flowering Time	Height (ft)	Remarks
* <i>Gaillardia aristata</i> Gaillardia blanket flower	Red-orange	June-Sept.	2	One of the best for xeriscapes.
<i>Gypsophila paniculata</i> Baby's breath	White	July-Sept.	2 1/2	Lacy, bush-like.
<i>Hemerocallis</i> spp. Daylily	Yellow, red, orange	June-July	2 to 2 1/2	Spreads to large clumps.
* <i>Iris germanica</i> Bearded iris	Various	May-June	1/2 to 3	Easy to grow.
* <i>Lavandula angustifolia</i> Lavender	Lavender	July-Aug.	1	Fragrant; shrub-like.
* <i>Liatris scariosa</i> Gayfeather	Lavender	July-Sept.	1 to 2	Showy in late summer.
<i>Linum perenne</i> *Blue flax	Blue	May-Sept.	1-1/2	Almost shrub-like.
<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i> Lupine	Various	June-Aug.	2 1/2 to 3	Good accent with shrubs.
<i>Monarda didyma</i> Beebalm	Crimson	June-July	2 to 3	Best in mass plantings.
<i>Paeonia officinalis</i> Peony	White, pink, red	May-June	2 to 2 1/2	Tolerates some shade.
* <i>Papaver nudicaule</i> Iceland poppy	Orange hues	April-June	1	Good edging plant.
* <i>P. orientalis</i> Oriental poppy	Orange, salmon, red	May-June	1 1/2 to 2	Aggressive creeper.
* <i>Penstemon</i> spp. Penstemon	Red, white, blue	June-July	2 to 3	Many varieties.
<i>Phlox paniculata</i> Phlox	White, lavender	May-July	1 to 1 1/2	Easy to grow.
* <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> Black-eyed Susan	Yellow	July	2 to 3	Needs space.
* <i>Rudbeckia laciniata hortensiana</i> Golden glow	Yellow	July-Sept.	5 to 6	Tall, late summer flower.
* <i>Scabiosa caucasica</i> Scabiosa	Lavender	May-Aug.	1 to 1 1/2	Fern-like foliage.
* <i>Sedum</i> spp. Sedum, stonecrop	Various	May-Sept.	1/2 to 1	Many varieties; succulent foliage.
<i>Veronica spicata</i> Veronica	Purple	May-June	2 to 4	Aggressive creeper.
<i>Viola cornuta</i> Tufted pansy	Various	May-Sept.	1/2	Shade or sun.
* <i>Zinnia grandiflora</i> Paperflower	Yellow	June-Sept.	1/2	Long-lasting bloom.

\*Most drought-enduring.

## Rock Gardens

Rock gardens can be an attractive addition to a xeriscape garden. Put them in logical areas such as steep sunny slopes, rather than as mounds in the middle of a yard. Strive for a natural look and avoid a "rock pile" look or "garden of rock" look. For more information on rock gardens and the plants to use, refer to 7.401, *Rock Garden Plants*.

<sup>1</sup>J.R. Feucht, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension landscape plants specialist and professor (retired), horticulture. Prepared in cooperation with the Technical Advisory Committee for Xeriscape Front Range, an affiliate of the National Xeriscape Council, Inc. Reviewed by D. Whiting, Cooperative Extension ornamental horticulture specialist, horticulture and landscape architecture.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Milan A. Rewerts, Director of Cooperative Extension, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. Cooperative Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. No endorsement of products mentioned is intended nor is criticism implied of products not mentioned.



*Are you interested in more fact sheets on agriculture, consumer, food, gardening, insects or natural resources?*

Shop *The Other Bookstore!* Why do we call ourselves *The Other Bookstore?* Because our bookstore provides information you won't find anywhere else in the state.

Our publications deal with questions that are too local or specific to show up in a traditional bookstore. Like plants for mountain communities. High altitude baking. Fertilizing Colorado crops. Honeylocust diseases. Coping with skunks. Livestock guard dogs.

With a collection of user-friendly books, booklets, fact sheets, videotapes and CD-ROMs, we take on the problems you face — and we do it in a quick and convenient form.

Whether your interest is food or finance, gardening or grandparenting, weeds or wildlife, chances are we have something for you.

Contact us for a free catalog:

Address: 115 General Services Bldg.  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, CO 80523-4061  
Phone: (970) 491-6198  
Fax: (970) 491-2961  
E-mail: cerc@vines.colostate.edu  
Web: www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt

RECEIVED  
MAR 12 1999  
STATE PUBLICATIONS  
Colorado State Library

*We're the university bookstore that serves Colorado!*