

Coreopsis Belongs in Every Garden

Coreopsis, commonly called tickseed, belongs in the 'happy-go-lucky' family of flowering perennials. They will grow in almost any kind of soil and will survive in spite of common gardening mistakes including watering too much, forgetting to water enough, and being sited in less than optimal light conditions. If asked, they would tell you they would prefer to be planted in fertile, well-drained soil in full sun to light shade.

There are species of Coreopsis available from six inches to six feet tall. Most bloom in summer with lots of cheerful yellow daisy-like flowers. They attract birds and butterflies, but are not palatable to deer.

Mouse ear Coreopsis (*C. auriculata*) is loaded with brilliant golden-orange blooms in May and June and continues to bloom sporadically until frost. These 6 to 9" tall plants spread by seed without being invasive. Plant them at the front of a border.

Coreopsis 'Jethro Bull' grows 12 to 15" tall and 18" wide. Plant a swath of them in full to part sun, and it will set your landscape ablaze with large, yellow, uniquely fluted flowers from June to July.

If yellow is not your favorite color, choose **Coreopsis rosea 'Heaven's Gate'**. Brilliant pink flowers with darker centers and a tiny yellow eye blanket 18 to 24" tall plants all summer.



Threadleaf Coreopsis (*C. verticillata*) is an outstanding species. They are airy, mounding plants with very fine, dark green foliage. They bloom longer than other species beginning in early June and continuing into September. They are not only longer lived, but also easier to maintain. Cutting back spent blossoms after their first burst of summer bloom will reward you with autumn flowering. There are many cultivars worthy of a spot in your landscape.

'**Moonbeam**' was named the 1992 Perennial of the Year. It grows 18 to 24" tall and is covered with soft yellow flowers that mix well with most other flowers in the garden. Sporting large canary yellow flowers, '**Full Moon**' grows a little taller – up to 30" tall. The luminous flowers of '**Moonray**' glow in the late afternoon and evening garden. It is more vigorous and better branched than 'Moonbeam'.

'**Sienna Sunset**' shares all the general characteristics as its cousins, but features burnt sienna blooms that lighten first to orange and then to peach. My favorite, '**Zagreb**', grows a bit shorter than other threadleaf coreopsis topping out somewhere between 12 and 18".

What it lacks in size, it makes up for with an abundance of cheerful golden yellow flowers that keep on coming all summer long. The Royal Horticultural Society liked it so much it won its Award of Garden Merit in 2001.

Coreopsis tripteris is a stately plant with sturdy stems reaching to 6' tall. Commonly referred to as tall tickseed, its wide clusters of two-inch, dark-centered, single yellow flowers bloom from mid summer to fall. Plant it at the back of a border or in a prairie planting. In optimum growing conditions, it will freely self-seed forming large colonies. This plant is difficult to find, but worth the search.

Coreopsis are wonderful additions to the perennial border. Combine yellow hued varieties with blue, red or purple flowered neighbors. Picture them alongside the deep blue spikes of May Night Salvia and the red blooms of bee balm (*Monarda 'Jacob Kline'*). Mediate the fiery display with the silvery-gray leaves of lamb's ear (*Stachys 'Helen von Stein'*) and you've got a winning combination.

Varieties with especially long bloom times are excellent candidates for container planting. Zagreb, for instance, is beautiful planted in a container with deep purple Heliotrope, a red-flowered Celosia, and a marigold with orange blooms. Add purple fountain grass (*Pennisetum rubrum*) for height and texture and use licorice plant (*Helichrysum petiolatum*) to spill over the edge – fun and full of color!

Year after year, Coreopsis remains one of the top perennials sold. They are workhorses in sunny perennial gardens. They fit perfectly in any garden design where they will provide summer-long color. Coreopsis are dependable, easy to care for, and deserve a place in your garden.

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