

## Go crazy for Coreopsis.

Coreopsis, commonly called tickseed, are about as carefree as perennials get. They grow in almost any kind of soil and survive common rookie gardener mistakes like watering a little too much or forgetting to water enough. Given their choice, they would put their roots down in a spot with rich, well-drained soil in full sun to light shade.

There are types of Coreopsis as small as 6 inches and as tall as 6 feet. Most bloom in summer with lots of cheerful daisy-like flowers. Birds, bees and butterflies are fans; deer are not.

**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 rosea ‘Heaven’s Gate’** sports brilliant pink flowers with tiny yellow centers in June and July on bushy plants growing 18 to 24 inches tall. *Achillea ‘Moonshine’*, with its flattened clusters of bright lemon-yellow flowers, is a beautiful border buddy.

**Coreopsis ‘Jethro Tull’** displays unique fluted, golden yellow petals on large blooms in June and July. Plants reach up to 18 inches tall and wide.

**Coreopsis tripteris** is a stately plant with sturdy stems reaching up to 6 feet 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 the border or in a prairie planting. In optimum growing conditions, it self-seeds forming large colonies. This plant is difficult to find, but worth the search.

**Threadleaf Coreopsis** (*C. verticillata*) is an outstanding species. Airy, mounding plants have 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. There are many cultivars worthy of a spot in your landscape.

‘Cosmic Eye’ shows off sunny yellow and burgundy red flowers with gold centers. It grows 12 to 15 inches tall and wide. ‘Crazy Cayenne’ brightens the landscape with reddish orange centered, sunset orange blooms. It grows 15 to 18 inches tall and wide.

‘Mercury Rising’ boasts velvety red flowers with gold centers on plants growing 15 to 18 inches tall and wide. ‘Moonbeam’ was named Perennial of the Year in 1992. Plants grow 18 to 24 inches tall and their soft yellow flowers mix beautifully with most other flowers in the garden.

‘Red Chiffon’ bears brilliant yellow flowers with crimson red centers. ‘Red Satin’ wears wine red blooms. Both varieties grow 15 to 18 inches tall and wide.

‘Sienna Sunset’ features flowers that begin blooming burnt sienna but lighten to orange and then to peach. My favorite variety, ‘Zagreb’, won the Award of Garden Merit in 2001. Flowers, the color of summer sunshine, bloom in abundance.

Coreopsis are mainstays in perennial gardens where their foliage contributes fine texture and their long-blooming flowers provide bright summer blooms.

They are amenable plants, ready and willing to partner with many other perennials. Varieties with yellow flowers are lovely combined with blue, purple and red flowered neighbors. Picture 'Jethro Tull' with the red blooms of bee balm and deep blue spikes of salvia or veronica.

Types with exceptionally long bloom times, like 'Zagreb', are ideal candidates for containers. Imagine it in a pot with deep purple heliotrope and bright pink vinca. Add purple fountain grass for height and a chartreuse sweet potato vine to spill over the edge and enjoy the riot of color all summer long.

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