



CREATE A COTTAGE GARDEN LOOK WITH THESE EASY-TO-GROW ANNUALS

This year, why not try growing some annuals from seed? It is inexpensive, and it provides an opportunity to experiment with varieties that are not readily available as plants. Many annuals can be sown directly in the garden, or seeds can be sown inside a few weeks before the last frost for a head start.

Cosmos are good plants to start with because they have large, easy to handle seeds and they germinate quickly. Earlier varieties will bloom from seed in as little as 8 weeks. Plant cosmos in a sunny area in ordinary garden soil. They are easy to grow, thrive in heat and humidity, rarely require support, and need no supplemental fertilizer. Their delicate flowers and soft, fern-like foliage are effective massed or in the back of a border.

Cosmos are available in single and semi-double forms, and in a variety of colors from pink, white and lavender to yellow, red and orange shades. They attract finches and butterflies and are also wonderful cut flowers.

Leave a few seed heads on the plants at season's end and they are likely to self-sow.

Sunflowers are another good bet for the novice gardener. Like cosmos, their seeds are large and easy to handle. Sow the seeds inside in peat pots several weeks before the last frost, or wait until after frost to sow them outside in a sunny spot in the garden. Sunflowers are offered in a much greater variety than ever before, from the traditional giants that grow up to fifteen feet tall to container-grown dwarf varieties reaching only twelve to fifteen inches. The color palette has expanded as well: sunflowers come in all shades of yellow, creamy white, orange, bronze, wine red, and bicolor. Traditional tall varieties make a fine, quick-growing screen or hedge while providing an abundance of seeds for snacking or for attracting birds. Some of the



newer hybrids are especially good for cutting, as they are pollen-free. Sunflowers are

spectacular for mass planting, and also work well at the back of the border or the edge of a vegetable garden. Dwarf sunflowers make a colorful display in containers, by themselves or mixed with other annuals.

Zinnias are an easy to grow, old-fashioned favorite, and an excellent choice for adding bold, bright color to the flower border. Zinnias have easy to handle seeds, and dwarf varieties will bloom in as little as 8 weeks from seed. They are available in every color except blue, and they bloom continuously from mid-summer until frost. Height can be anywhere from six to thirty-six inches. Flowers are single, semi-double or double, from one to six inches across. Taller varieties are superb for cutting and the back of the border, and shorter ones are perfect for use in containers or as edging in the front of the border.

Zinnias love heat and will fill the garden with color in mid to late summer at a time when many other flowers are finished blooming. Plant zinnias in full sun and give them plenty of space to keep the foliage healthy. Small varieties should be planted eight to ten inches apart; give larger

to ten inches apart; give larger varieties up to eighteen inches of space.



Butterflies love zinnias, too.

For a cottage garden look and bright blue color, try bachelor's buttons or cornflower. Plant them in a sunny location in good garden soil and water moderately, making several sowings to ensure blooms all summer. Bachelor's buttons frequently self-sow the following spring. In addition to blue, bachelor's buttons come in shades of pink, lavender and white, and are a good

choice for cutting, mass planting or mixing into the border. Bachelor's buttons grow one to three feet tall and produce bright, round flowers over slender, gray-green foliage. The flowers dry well if picked when newly opened and hung upside down in a cool, dry dark place.

For delicate beauty, try growing annual poppies. Like cosmos and bachelor's buttons, they often self-sow, and although the seeds are tiny, they are not difficult to grow. Scatter them sparsely outside in early spring directly where they are to grow. Choose a sunny, well-drained site, and plant them in drifts for a natural look. In summer, they will produce silken flowers in glorious pastel shades of pink, rose, coral, white and cream.

For a fast-growing vine, plant morning glories. Be sure to soak the large seeds in water the night before planting. Sow in peat pots or directly into the garden, as morning glories resent transplanting. Grow morning glories in a sunny site in ordinary soil, and give them something to climb on. Besides the traditional blue, morning glories come in shades of pink, carmine and rose. Try growing them together with moonflower vine, a close relative of morning glories that produces fragrant, white night-blooming flowers.

Many other annuals are easy to grow from seed. Four o'clocks, marigolds, moss roses, nasturtiums and strawflowers are some others to try.