



## Plants that Like it Hot & Dry

What will grow in those hot, dry spots in the landscape? The kind of “hot and dry” that one designer fondly refers to as “the inferno zone?” You may have a spot like that in your own yard. Between the sidewalk and the foundation of the house. In the back corner of the yard, up against a fence. Wedged between the sidewalk, the street and the driveway. Under the mailbox, or in a container that sits in hot, full sun. Perhaps every plant you’ve tried in that spot looks great for a week and then shrivels away to nothing, baked by the sun and rising summer temperatures.

### Annuals

Conditions can be brutal. Soil is often poor. This is no place for an azalea! For sites like these, annuals are often the best choice. Annuals must be planted every year, but most will put on a summer-long show and can be tougher than some perennials. Annuals can be grown from seed or transplants and put out when the weather is solidly warm. In our area, if planted too early these heat-lovers will languish in cool temperatures. They may suffer in our frequent rainy weeks in springtime.

- Amaranthus species: Low to tall, depending on variety. Most have brightly colored flowers and/or foliage.
- Madagascar periwinkle ( *Catarranthus* ) Medium height. One of the best bedding plants for inferno zones. Hot pink, white, pale pink.
- California Poppy ( *Eschscholzia californica* ) Medium, fine textured grey-green foliage. Golden yellow flowers.
- Calliopsis ( *Coreopsis tinctoria* ) Medium. Gold flowers with burgundy eye.
- Cockscomb ( *Celosia cristata* ) Medium. Flowers in yellows, oranges, reds.
- Cornflower ( *Centaurea* species ) Old-fashioned bachelor’s buttons.
- Cosmos ( *Cosmos* species ) Medium to tall. Flowers white, pink, yellow.
- Creeping Zinnia ( *Sanvitalia procumbens* ) Low. Small daisylike flowers are yellow, gold or orange with a dark eye.
- Dahlberg Daisy A profusion of small, bright yellow flowers over low mounds of ferny foliage.
- Globe Amaranth ( *Gomphrena* ) Low to tall varieties. Purples, white, pink.
- Mexican sunflower ( *Tithonia* ) Medium to tall. Bright orange flowers attract butterflies
- Moss Rose ( *Portulaca* ) Another excellent bedding plant for inferno zones. Bright flowers over sprawling succulent stems. Newer varieties boast extended bloom.
- Scarlet Sage ( *Salvia splendens* ) A medium-sized native with tubular red flowers.
- Spider Flower ( *Cleome* ) Tall, with feathery foliage and pink or white showy flowers.
- Sunflowers ( *Helianthus* ): Cultivars range in height from 2 to 12 feet tall, with flowers in many sizes and shades of yellow, gold, red and mahogany.

Zinnia ( *Zinnia* hybrids ): Profusion or Star series are loaded with white, bright pink or orange single flowers. Resistant to powdery mildew.

## Perennials

When planting perennials the choice of site is most important. Plants that do well in hot dry spots during the summer may not survive wet soils in winter. They can die out even though they are hardy to our winter temperature zone.

As a rule of thumb, plants that have either grayish fuzzy foliage or succulent leaves and stems will be drought tolerant.

- Agastache varieties Medium to tall with showy spikes of white, pink, mauve or purple flowers, depending upon the variety.
- Blanket Flower ( *Gallardia aristata* ) Low to medium, showy banded flowers in burgundy and bright gold.
- Ceratostigma Groundcover with intense-blue flowers in late summer and excellent red fall color. It can be late to emerge but fills in beautifully by summer.
- Tickseed ( *Coreopsis* ) Medium with bright gold flowers.
- Fleabane ( *Erigeron* ) Medium to tall with daisy type flowers in white, pink or lavender.
- Seaholly ( *Eryngium* ) Medium with steel blue thistle-like flowers over silvery foliage.
- Mountain bluet ( *Centaurea* ) Medium with bright cornflower blue flowers.
- Catmint ( *Nepeta* varieties ) Low to tall, with lavender, white, or pink flowers.
- Penstemon Low to tall, a great native plant with many varieties. Spikes of tubular flowers in shades of purple, pink, white and intense blue.
- Prairie dropseed ( *Sporobolus heterolepis* ) Medium. A fine-textured native grass. Foliage turns golden with orange hues in the fall, fading to light bronze in winter.
- Red Valerian ( *Centranthus* ) Medium to tall, highly adaptable plant with red flowers. Will self-sow.
- Stonecrop ( *Sedum* ) Groundcover to medium sized varieties with showy succulent foliage and flowers in white, purples and yellows.
- Yarrow ( *Achillea* ) Low to medium with flat-topped flowers in various shades of gold, red, pink and white. Very long flowering.

Heat lovers will spring into active growth by late June or early July in our area. Give them a good start by keeping them evenly moist but not wet during germination and early growth. Once they get their roots down, they will thrive in spite of drought.