

Summer Blooms

Heat tolerant flowers that add bursts of color to gardens and landscapes.



Sunflowers make great backdrops in summer gardens. Photo by Janet Shalestik

By Marilyn Campbell

As spring flowers begin to wither under the heat and humidity of summer, the vibrant blooms that once graced yards and gardens begin to fade. It's during this time that landscapers and gardeners rely on a bevy of color-rich flowering plants that are hearty enough to stand up to the relentless summer sun.

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"There are many annuals that keep blooming and producing more flowers, so you have constant color and constant flowers throughout the summer," said Janet Shalestik, Plant Specialist, Merrifield Garden Center, Fair Oaks, Virginia.

"They can all be planted either in the ground or in containers."

One of the most popular is Lantana, which can be variegated in two-toned red and orange and Salvia, which can grow to be two to three feet tall. Both flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies, says Shalestik. "Salvia are often purple and blue and sometimes red. What a lot of people like to do is put them containers on their patio, deck so they can see the hummingbirds and butterflies while they're sitting outside."

Orange and pink Begonias, Petunias in deep purple and fuchsia, towering Sunflowers and Zinnias with blooms that burst in colors like orange, pink and yellow and deep pink are also top summer picks, said Shalestik. "Zinnias can get nice and tall so people sometimes want to use them as a backdrop in their garden."

Summer-flowering Vinca are a low-maintenance choice. "They're very heat tolerant, they don't have to deadhead and they're very deer-resistant," said Shalestik.

"Hydration is key, especially for flowers that are planted in containers," said Janet. "It's important to water when it's hot and we're not getting much rain. We recommend watering in the morning so they're hydrated when the intense heat starts."