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## Annual Flowers for Southern Florida and their 5 Principles

### Choosing The Right Plant -

Culture of annuals in Florida is different from that in most states. Florida has three climatic regions. During the winter, nights are cool with an occasional freeze in central and south Florida and frequent freezes in north Florida. In early spring and late fall, nights are cool, whereas high night temperatures, heavy rains, and high relative humidity are typical during summer and early fall. Careful attention

### Choosing the Correct Location -

Selection of annuals should be greatly influenced by the available light in the area. Some annuals, such as marigold and ageratum, perform best in full sun. Others, such as impatiens and dahlia, grow best in semi shade or limited hours of sun. There are no flowering annuals that will perform well under heavy shade. For light shade try crossandra or tuberous begonia.



### Site Preparation -

Annual plantings sites should be spaded or tilled at least 6-8 inches deep several weeks before planting. Organic material should be incorporated in the soil or planting soil, designed for annuals, installed on top of existing soil at a depth of 6-8 inches.

### Planting Properly -

Annuals purchased in plastic containers usually have a root-bound root system. If planted intact, the root system will be slow to establish and will suffer. The preferred method is to loosen and untangle the root with out breaking the soil ball. Tall and spindly plants should be pruned to half their size. Spacing is based on the size of maturity of the plant.

### Pests and Diseases -

The best method of reducing insects and/or disease problems is to keep the plants growing vigorously and free from stress. Cultural practices that should help are:

1. Proper Plant Site
2. Avoid low light and minimal air circulation
3. Keeps plants growing vigorously
4. Avoid frequent wilting
5. Remove spent flowers if necessary
6. Keep water off of plants as much as possible to limit fungus
7. Remove Weeds

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## Shrubs

Now that you understand the concept behind Florida-friendly landscaping, let's talk a bit about shrubs and what they can do for you.

### The 9 principles of Florida-friendly landscaping are:

- Choosing the right plant for the right place
- Watering efficiently
- Fertilizing appropriately
- Using mulch in plant beds
- Attracting wildlife
- Managing yard pests responsibly
- Reducing storm water runoff
- Protecting the waterfront

### Shrubs are woody perennials in Florida landscapes:

1. They improve air quality.
2. Stabilize the soil with their expansive root systems.
3. Provide wildlife habitat to birds and other creatures.
4. Large, deciduous shrubs, if planted on the south and west sides of a home, provide shade and passive cooling effects on structures.



The Shade from large shrubs in the heat of summer can potentially reduce indoor cooling costs by as much as 20 percent.

The following are some particularly tough, colorful, and drought-resistant shrubs for South Florida landscapes.

Florida-Friendly Shrubs that have color and drought tolerance:

Dwarf Allamanda  
Esperanza (Tecoma stans)  
Firebush (Hamelia patens)  
Thyrallis (Galphimia glauca)  
Plumbago (Plumbago ariculata)

For pictures and more detailed information on the plants mentioned, copy and paste the following link:  
[http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/giam/plants\\_and\\_grasses/flowering\\_plants/annual\\_flowers.html](http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/giam/plants_and_grasses/flowering_plants/annual_flowers.html)

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## Perennials

Perennials are plants that grow indefinitely.

The shrubs and trees that comprise our landscapes are perennials, but these are referred to as woody perennials. The plants discussed here are herbaceous perennials-plants with little or no woody tissue. However, under the continuous growing conditions of south Florida, some herbaceous perennials become woody shrubs. Likewise, plants that are normally woody shrubs in south Florida behave as herbaceous perennials in north Florida where they are killed to the ground each winter.

Plants which grow from bulbs, corms, tubers, or other types of underground storage systems are also herbaceous perennials. The selection and care of these plants is discussed in Circular 552, "Bulbs For Florida," copy and paste link: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG029>.



Some perennials are used to best advantage when they are planted in masses. The bold displays of color they provide are much more pleasing than individual plants placed here and there. Evergreen and flowering shrubs provide a beautiful backdrop for masses of small perennials, whereas large-growing perennials can be used as specimen plants.

Note the mature size of each perennial you select. Most large-growing perennials can be maintained as a smaller plant, but it may require frequent pruning to keep them that way. Is the perennial tender or hardy to cold? Tender perennials will need cold protection during frosts or freezes. How much sunlight does it require? When does it flower? Ideally, a garden should have a succession of blooms throughout the year.

Flower and foliage color is another important design consideration. "Warm" colors such as orange, red and yellow should be grouped together and segregated from the "cool" hues and pastels. White, blue, silver /gray and green go with everything and can be used as transition colors in the garden. Repetition of color and form pulls the eye through the garden and provides a pleasing cohesiveness.

Consider all these factors when determining how and where plants should be used in the landscape or perennial garden. Inexperienced perennial growers may find it challenging to design a garden. Luckily, most perennials transplant well and beds can be easily rearranged if needed.

For further information on Perennials from University of Florida copy and paste the following link: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg035>

If you would like more information and prices on using Annuals, Bushes or Perennials for spring color contact Estate today.

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