Department of Plant Sciences

PLANTS FOR TENNESSEE LANDSCAPES: SEED GROWN FLOWERS FOR THE GARDEN

January 2021

Celeste Scott, UT Extension Agent
Natalie Bumgarner, UT Extension Residential and Consumer Horticulture Specialist
Lucas Holman, TSU Extension Agent
Carol Reese, UT Extension Regional Horticulture Specialist
Jason Reeves, Research Associate, UT Gardens, Jackson
Lee Sammons, TSU Extension Agent

Introduction

Growing ornamental plants by seed is a tradition cherished by many Tennessee gardeners. These plants passed along by friends and family hold a special place in the home garden and in our memories. This list strives to include as many of these treasured heirloom passalong plants as possible, as well as those considered to be traditional and proven favorites. As new varieties and cultivars prove themselves in Tennessee growing conditions, this list will evolve and grow over time.



Centaurea cyanus, a cool season annual commonly called bachelors button or cornflower, is easily grown by direct seeding in Tennessee home gardens.

Seed versus Transplant

This publication spotlights plants that are easily grown from seed and known for their stellar performance in Tennessee home gardens. However, many of these plants are often absent from local garden centers. Some do not transplant well, and others are not particularly attractive in cell packs, which ultimately effects salability and justifies their absence. Thus, these plants are separated from those in UT Extension publication "Plants for Tennessee Landscapes: Annuals and Biennials W 874-A", which focuses on annuals that are easily sourced at garden centers.



Nigella damascena, Love-in-a-mist is a welcome addition to a cottage garden edging.



Source seeds from seed catalogues, garden centers or fellow gardeners who are eager to share. Some of the harder to find cultivars might require a search for companies or social media groups that specialize in heirlooms, new market arrivals and specialty niches.

About the List

Plants are organized in alphabetical order by scientific name, and the most widely accepted common names are also listed.

The list is predominately composed of annuals easily grown from seed, but some biennials and perennials are also included and noted in the comments column. Please refer to side bar for more detailed information on these plant groupings. Growing requirements, plant attributes and common uses will also be found in the comments column.

The Direct Sow column indicates those plants that do well, or even best, when directly sown in the ground or allowed to reseed in place. Others prefer to be started indoors, and some are adapted to either method! For more tips on starting seed indoors check out UT Extension publication "The Tennessee Vegetable Garden: Garden Planning, Plant Preparation and Planting W 346-B."

Though seed starting can require attention to soil temperature, lighting, depth, scarification and stratification, don't be intimidated. This guide promotes those easier plants to grow from seed that will provide colorful and budget friendly additions to the Tennessee home garden.



Mixed annual border at the UT Gardens, Jackson located at the West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center.



Sulfur cosmos, *Cosmos sulphureus*, add height and movement to the landscape.

Botanical Terms Simplified

Annuals complete their life cycle in a single growing season. They germinate, flower and set seed before dying. Some plants we treat as annuals in Tennessee, though in warmer climates they would be perennial. Summer annuals complete their mission during warm moths, and winter annuals (also known as cool season annuals) prefer the cooler temperatures of fall and spring.

Biennials require two growing seasons to complete their life cycle. They produce foliage that must experience winter chilling (vernalization) which initiates flowering the following season. Those flowers produce and drop seed, which consequently germinate and begin the winter chilling process once again. Therefore, once established, they will seemingly provide an "annual" bloom display, though it took two growing seasons to achieve those blooms. Many wildflowers are biennial.

Perennials return each year when regionally adapted and proper conditions exist. Some will die to the ground with overwintering roots while others may retain basal foliage through the winter. Some are short-lived even in ideal settings, and return only for a few years, while others may live for many decades.

Tender Perennials are those that will survive winters that are mild or could benefit from micro siting in the landscape to achieve a few added degrees of protection.

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	ht Ne	eeds	DI	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
Abelmoschus esculentus Okra	4-6	X			July- September	X	. Candle Fire . Red Burgundy	 Unusual tall foliage plant Fruit is edible and ornamental Heat tolerant Cut flower-pods
Abelmoschus manihot Ornamental Okra	4-6	X			July- September	X		Unusual tall foliage plantLarge yellow flowerHeat tolerantCut flower-pods
Ageratum houstonianum Floss Flower	1-2	X	X		June-Frost		. Blue Horizon	Attracts pollinators Cut flowers-tall varieties
Alcea rugosa Hollyhock	3-6	X	X		May-June	X		Attracts pollinators Cut flower Biennial
Amaranthus caudatus Love-lies-bleeding	3-6	X	X		July-Frost	X		 Large clustered trailing flowers of red, yellow or green Tolerates drought Dry and cut flower Reseeds
Amaranthus cruentus Amaranth	3-8	X	X		July-Frost	X	Hot Biscuits Autumn Torch Hopi Red Dye	 Large upright plume type flower clusters Tolerates drought Dry and cut flower Reseeds
Ammi majus False Queen Anne's Lace False Bishops Weed	1.5-2	X	X		May-July	X		Attracts pollinatorsBest when direct sownReseedsCut flower
Asclepias curassavica Annual Milkweed	2-4	X	X		June- October	X		Attracts pollinators Host plant for monarch caterpillar Reseeds

April/2020

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	ht Ne	eeds	DI.	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
Asclepias physocarpa								
also known as								
Gomphocarpus physocarpus	4-6	X	X		July- August X	X		Attracts pollinators Host plant for monarch caterpillar Reseeds
Swan Butterfly Weed								. Dry and cut flower- seed pods
Balloon Plant								
Hairy Balls								
Asclepias tuberosa Butterfly Weed	1.5-2	X	X		May-July	X		 Native perennial Attracts pollinators Host plant for monarch caterpillar Reseeds Can be sown in the fall
Beta vulgaris Garden Beets	1-2	X	X		Foliage	X	. Bulls Blood	Cool season edible root crop with ornamental foliage Direct seed in early spring or late summer Spring/Fall/Winter foliage
Beta vulgaris subsp. vulgaris Swiss Chard	1-2	X	X		Foliage	X	Bright Lights Rainbow Ruby Red Rhubarb	 Cool season edible leafy green though some are quite heat and cold tolerant Offer wide array of colorful foliage Direct seed in early spring or late summer Fall/Winter- Colorful spines and broad foliage
Capsicum annuum Ornamental Pepper	.5-2	X	X		June-Frost		MedusaPurple FlashPrairie FireBlack Pearl	 Ornamental varieties hold their fruit in an upright, showy position Reseeds Cut flower-fruit and foliage
Celosia argentea Wheat	2-3	X	X		June-Frost	X	. Celway . Asian Garden	Tall plant with wheat head type bloom Attracts pollinators Reseeds

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	ht Ne	eeds	DI	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
							Flamingo Feather	Dry and cut flower Heat and drought tolerant
Celosia cristata Cockscomb	1-2	X	X		June-Frost	X	BombayNeoSupercrestChiefPrestige Scarlet	 Bright bloom colors Attracts pollinators Reseeds Dry and cut flower Heat and drought tolerant
Celosia plumosa Plumed	1-2	X	X		June-Frost	X	Fresh Look New Look First Flame	 Bright bloom colors Attracts pollinators Reseeds Dry and cut flower Heat and drought tolerant
Centaurea cyanus Cornflower Bachelor Button	2-3	X	X		April-June	X		 Cool season annual Drought and poor soil tolerant Can be sown in the fall or late winter Blooms in true blue, purple, pink, and white Reseeds Dry and cut flower
Cleome hassleriana Cleome Spider Flower	3-5	X	X		June-Frost	X	. Sparkler . Queen	 Tall with unique palmately compound leaves Sometimes has spines along the stem Attracts hummingbirds and pollinators Reseed Cut flower
Consolida ajacis Larkspur	2-4	X	X		May-June	X		 Cool season annual Blooms in blue, purple, pink and white Direct seed in fall or winter for spring display Best when direct seeded Reseeds Dry and cut flower

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	Light Needs		DI.	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
Cosmos bipinnatus Cosmos	2-5	X	X		May-Frost	X	Sensation Seashell Sonata	 Drought tolerant Attracts pollinators Blooms in white, pink, yellow and magenta Best when direct seeded and may reseed Cut flower
Cosmos sulphureus Sulfur Cosmos	2-5	X	X		May-Frost	X	. Cosmic . Bright Lights . Sunny	 Drought tolerant Attracts pollinators Blooms in hues of yellow/orange Best when direct seeded Reseeds Cut flower
Daucus carota Queen Anne's Lace	2-4	X	X		June- August	X		 Biennial that should be seeded in fall White to cream colored lacey blooms Attracts pollinators Drought tolerant Reseeds-can become weedy Cut flower Host plant for black swallowtail caterpillars
Echinacea pallida Pale Coneflower	1.5-3	X	X		June-July	X		Short lived perennial, native Often reseeds Tolerates poor dry sites Attracts pollinators and birds in winter
Echinacea purpurea Purple Coneflower	1.5-3	X	X		June- August	X	 Pow Wow White Swan Cheyenne Spirit Magnus Magnus Supreme 	 Perennial, native Attracts pollinators and birds in winter Reseeds and can be propagated by division Hybrids offer a range of colors Does not require stratification but can be seeded in fall Cut flower
Echinacea tennesseensis	1.5-3	X	X		June-July	X	. Rocky Top	. Perennial, native

January 2021

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	Light Needs		DI	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
Tennessee Coneflower								Requires excellent drainage Attracts pollinators and birds in winter Reseeds and can be propagated by division Requires stratification, if direct seeded it must be sown in fall or winter Cut flower
Foeniculum vulgare	4-5	X	X		July- August	X	. Bronze Fennel	Short-lived perennial Ornamental and edible plant parts with licorice flavor, feathery foliage Heat tolerance Host plant for swallowtail caterpillars Cut flower-bloom and foliage
Fennel					August		. Antares	Annual vegetable Ornamental and edible plant parts with licorice flavor, feathery foliage Heat tolerance Host plant for swallowtail caterpillars
Gomphrena globosa Globe Amaranth	.5-2	X	X		May-Frost	X	GnomeFireworksStrawberryFields	 Does well in most soils and tolerates drought Reseeds Tall and compact cultivars available Dry and cut flower
							H. annuus	 Attracts pollinators and birds Many bloom colors and heights available Cut flower-look for pollen-less varieties
Helianthus spp. Sunflower	2-8 or more X	X	X		July- October	X	Perennial species . H.angustifolia . H. maximillianii . H. salicifolia	Perennial forms bloom summer or late summer into fall Some perennial forms can be large and form aggressive colonies Excellent for wildlife plantings

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	ht Ne	eeds	DI	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
Ipomoea alba Moonvine	Vine	X	X		July-Frost	X		 White bloom flowers at night, very fragrant Attracts nighttime pollinators Vine requires support Seeds must be scarified for good germination
Ipomoea imperialis Morning Glory	Vine	X	X		July-Frost	X		Blooms in many colors Vine requires support Reseeds and is weedy
Ipomoea quamoclit Cypress Vine	Vine	X	X		June-Frost	X		Fine foliaged vine with small trumpet shaped red blooms, requires support Attracts hummingbirds and other pollinators Reseeds, can become weedy
Ipomoea x multifidi Cardinal Climber	Vine	X	X		June-Frost	X		Red blooms Foliage is lacy but not as fine as Cypress Vine Reseeds, not as weedy as Cypress Vine
Lathyrus odoratus Sweet Pea	Vine	X	X		April-June	X		 Attracts pollinators, bloom is fragrant Cool season annual Can be sown in late winter to early spring Prefers cooler less humid conditions Cut flower
Limonium sinuatum Statice	1-1.5	X	X		June-July			Requires excellent drainage Prefers cooler less humid conditions Dry flower
Lunaria annua Dollar Plant Money Plant	2		X	X	April-May	X		 Biennial, best in shade to part shade Blooms in white and pinkish/lavender Grown for the display of showy seed pods Reseeds Dry and cut flower

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	tht Ne	eeds	DI	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
Lychnis coronaria Rose Campion	2-2.5	X	X		May-July	X		Short-lived perennial, may perform as a biennial Blooms in magenta or white Silver/gray foliage Reseeds and can be propagated by division
Malva sylvestris Malva Tall Mallow	4-6	X	X		July- September	X		Blooms in rose-purple with darker stripes Cut flower
Malvaviscus arboreus var. drummondii Turks Cap	4-6	X	X		June-Frost	X	. Big Momma	Bush-like native perennial Blooms are usually red, some pink forms, too Attracts hummingbirds and pollinators
<i>Mirabilis jalapa</i> Four O'clock	2-3	X	X		June-Frost	X	Broken Colors Limelight Marbles	 Brightly colored flowers open in the afternoon each day, very fragrant Reseeds Tuberous roots may resprout in mild winters acting as perennials
Nigella damascena Love-in-a-mist	1-1.5	X	X		May-July	X	. Miss Jekyll	 Cool season annual Best when direct seeded Airy ferny textured foliage Blooms in blue, white and purple Reseeds and can be sown in fall or early spring Dry flower-seed pods
Ocimum basilicum Basil	1-3	X	X		Summer	X	. Thai . Purple Ruffles . Spicy Globe	 Attracts pollinators Reseeds Downy mildew is an issue for basil, look for resistant cultivars like those suggested. Edible culinary herb Cut flower-foliage and bloom

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	ht Ne	eeds	DI	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
Oenothera speciosa Pink Evening Primrose	1	X	X		May-June	X		 Preforms well in a wide range of soils and growing conditions Perennial Drought tolerant Native, reseeds Spreads aggressively by rhizomes Bright pastel pink flowers
Papaver rhoeas Common Poppy Corn Poppy Flanders Poppy	1-1.5	X	X		May-June	X		 Blooms in a wide range of colors, patterns and forms Should be sown in fall to winter Best when direct seeded Dry flower-seed pod
Papaver somniferum Opium Poppy	3-5	X	X		May-June	X		 Blooms in a wide range of colors, patterns and forms Gray-green foliage with jagged edges Should be sown in fall to winter Best when direct seeded, reseeds Dry flower-seed pod
Physalis alkekengi Chinese Lantern Plant	1-2	X	X		N/A	X		 Bloom matures into a small fruit with a showy orange papery covering Best when direct seeded Reseeds Dry flower-seed pod Perennial, often grown as an annual
Plectranthus scutellarioides also known as Solenostomon scutellarioides	1-3	X	X	X	Foliage		Kong Kong Jr. Pineapple Surprise	Grown for its many colors of foliage Most seed grown cultivars are inferior to vegatatively grown cultivars Seed grown varieties need blooms pinched off regularly to promote more colorful foliage and bushy habit Cut flower-foliage

Scientific Name	Height	Height Light Needs		eds	DI	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
Coleus								
Ricinus communis Castor Bean	6-12	X	X		August- Frost	X	CarmencitaRed ImpalaRed GiantZanzibar	 Huge leaves on towering plant Bold tropical effect Beans are toxic so remove if in places of concern Reseeds
Rudbeckia hirta Gloriosa Daisy	1-2	X	X		June-Frost	X	Cherokee Goldilocks Indian Summer Prairie Sun	 Drought tolerant Tender perennial used as annual Fuzzy green foliage Large daisy like blooms in mixed shades of yellow, gold, to burnt orange Reseeds, native Cut flower
Salvia coccinea Texas Sage	1.5-3	X	X		June-Frost	X	Lady in RedSummerJewelsNymph	 Attracts hummingbirds and pollinators Native Reseeds Tolerates heat and drought
Salvia farinacea Mealycup Sage	1-2.5	X	X		June-Frost		Victoria Blue Evolution Violet	Attracts pollinatorsCut flowerTolerates heat and drought
Salvia splendens Scarlet Sage	1-2	X	X		June-Frost		LighthouseEarly BonfireRambo Red	Attract pollinatorsCut flowerTolerates heat and drought

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	ht Ne	eeds	DI	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
Tagetes erecta African Marigolds	1.5-2.5	X	X		June-Frost	X	Big DuckMoon SongMarvelTaishan	Blooms up to three inches in diameter Cut flower-long stem cultivars Tolerates heat and drought
Tagetes patula French Marigolds	.5-1	X	X		June-Frost		JaneSuper HeroBonanzaDurangoHero	 Blooms are smaller than <i>T. erecta</i> but plentiful Used as edging or front of borders Tolerates heat and drought
Talinum paniculatum Jewels of Opar	1-1.5	X			June-Frost	X	. Kingwood Gold	 Tolerant of heat, drought and poor soil Attracts pollinators Reseeds Dry and cut flower-seed heads 'jewels'
Thunbergia alata Black-eyed Susan Vine	Vine	X	X		June-Frost	X	. Susie	 Prefers well-drained soil Vine requires support Bloom is usually small yellow/orange trumpet shape with an open bell and dark center Attractive to pollinators Reseeds
Tithonia rotundifolia Mexican Sunflower	3-6	X			June-Frost	X	Fiesta Del SolTorchGoldfinger	 Attracts butterflies, birds and pollinators Cut flower Tolerates heat and drought Reseeds
Torenia fournieri Torenia	.5-1		X	X	May-Frost		. Clown . Kauai	Reseeds Blooms in blue, yellow, pink, white

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	ht Ne	eeds	DI	Direct	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom	Sow	Series	
Tropaeolum majus Nasturtium	1	X	X		April-May	X		 Prefers well-drained soil Sprawling habit Dislikes heat and humidity grows best in cooler regions of the state Can be planted in late winter to very early spring Edible, cut flower
Verbena bonariensis Stick Verbena Brazilian Verbena	3-5	X	X		June-Frost	X		 Airy vertical effect in gardens Perennial, but also reseeds Drought and heat tolerant Long bloom season Attracts pollinators Cut flower-used as accent
Xerochrysum bracteatum Strawflower Everlasting Flower	1-2	X			July-Frost	X		Requires dry sunny conditions Dry and cut flower
Zinnia angustifolia Zinnia	1	X	X		May-Frost	X	. Crystal . Star	Drought tolerant, disease resistant Mounding habit, needs no deadheading Useful in containers and landscape Attracts pollinators
Zinnia elegans Zinnia	2-3	X	X		May-Frost	X	 Magellan Zowie! Yellow Flame Queeny Benary Uproar Rose 	 Attracts pollinators Long season of color Use succession planting and deadheading to extend bloom period Powdery mildew and leaf spotting of foliage can be unsightly later in the season resistance Excellent cut flower cultivars available

January 2021

Scientific Name	Height	Lig	ht Ne	eeds	Dloom	Direct Sow	Cultivars/	Comments
Common Name	(feet)	Sun	Part Sun	Shade	Bloom		Series	
Zinnia hybrids	1	X	X		May-Frost	X	. Profusion . Zahara	 Profusion and Zahara Series have excellent mildew resistance Do not require deadheading Excellent mounding habit but stems too short for cut flower use



UTIA.TENNESSEE.EDU

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.