

# **A Beginner's Guide to Annuals and Biennials**

**Essential guide for A Beautiful Garden**



## **Gardening Series**

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## Introduction

There are far too many people out there who are under the impression that you cannot have a beautiful garden without spending huge amounts of money. That is so not true. A little bit of planning and this fallacy is going to fall to pieces by the wayside. Those who are grown annuals for years are going to give this statement the lie gladly.

Their initial investment must have been just a packet of seeds. The next year, the plants were grown from the seeds collected from the previous years' crop.

Do not forget that the life of an annual is limited to just 12 months and so you must not expect them to grow up and bloom again the next year, unless of course you allowed the seeds to lie in the bed without collecting them. That is when they are going to bloom up just like weeds with a little bit of rain, and with the coming of the spring.



One of the great advantages of annuals is that they are quite easy to grow and flourish in your garden over a long period. The most common are well known to even amateur gardeners who can recognize a cornflower, nasturtiums, Virginia stock and Candytuft. These are very beautiful in themselves, but every gardener is growing them in his garden.

So be a little adventurous and grow annuals that are lesser-known, whose names you will find in seed catalogs, nursery catalogs and in nurseries online.

There are two kinds of annuals – the hardy kind and the half hardy kind. The hardy annuals are sown out of doors, either in the autumn or in the spring. The half-hardy annuals are normally raised in frames or under cloches if you are subject to a continuous frost. Half-hardy annuals may need a little bit more of extra care and coddling, but that extra is going to be worth it when you see the blossoms in your garden.



## Choosing the Right Soil



The land has to be well drained and deeply cultivated. Annuals hate waterlogging and want plenty of area where the roots can run unencumbered. A modern soil surveyor can talk to any gardener, very learnedly about types of soils and he can just pick up some soil in his hand and feel the texture and moisture content in it. But our priority is more to seeing the right type of soil in which our plants can flourish throughout the year. There are five main types of soil, which are spread all over the earth and go into the making up of your garden.

These are Clay, loam, sand, calcareous – also known as lime – and peat soil. These soils are going to differ according to their components and how nature made them through the different weathering processes. This weathering was caused down the millenniums by the heat and the frost, by running water and rain, and by the cracking and pounding of rocks by glaciers and so on. So down the ages, the rocks began to break up and turned into dusty soil. That is why you are going to find many varied types of soils produced all over the world, depending on the weathering processes going on in that area.

These soils are going to be different in your particular area when compared to another area, but you can also get combinations of one or more soils too. It is possible that you may have Clay-ey loam. You may also have sandy loam. You may also have the topsoil, consisting of one type and the subsoil under it of another type.

**Sandy soils** are going to contain less than 10% of Clay. They also have very small particles of silica and quartz. The amount of humus which is present in the sandy soil is going to alter the color and the texture of the topsoil.

Sand is considered to be light soil. It is also dry. It is one of the warmest soils because of its dry Constitution. That is why sandy soil is going to warm up much quicker in the spring.

This is why sandy soil is best utilized in producing early crops. One of the advantages of sandy soil is that it can be worked at any time of the year and it is comparatively easy to cultivate. On the other hand, it is poor in plant foods and essential nutrients, coarse-grained and does not retain moisture easily.



**Soil without moisture.**

**Clay** – you can also call Clay “putty.” It is fine-grained and smooth and silky to the touch. Even when it is well drained, it is wet and so it is difficult to cultivate during rainy periods and in the winter months. In fact, if you dig it up or fork it when it is wet, it has a nasty habit of settling down – or panning – into a solid lump like cement. This is going to be very difficult to work afterwards.

Clays should be dug in the autumn, if possible, and left rough. This is so that the action of the frost and the wind can pulverize them and make them into an easily workable condition in the spring.

This soil is considered to be a late soil because it is impossible to get on them as early as sandy soils in the springs and thus the crops produced on such a soil is later in consequence. On the other hand, Clay soils are much richer in plant food than sand. This in addition to their water retention properties make them really invaluable in a dry season.

It is very important to see that Clay soils are well drained and this is one of the best ways in which you can improve them. You can also apply lime to Clay soils regularly as lime prevents them from becoming sticky. It also “opens” them up.

**Loamy Soil** – the best way of describing loam is to say that it is the ideal blend of sand and clay. The sand is present to keep the soil open. The Clay ensures that sufficient moisture retention properties are present in the soil.





There are various types of loams depending on the proportion of sand and clay present. You are going to find the word “loam” very common in any books pertaining to gardening, especially when you are looking for soils in which to plant your preferred seedlings. This is considered to be the best soil for a large number of plants. This has all the advantages of sandy soils and clay soils and none of their disadvantages.

The sand present in the soil is going to allow the plant roots to work easily throughout it. The clay present is going to help looking after the nutrients side. It is also going to prevent rapid drying out.

In wet weather, the water is going to percolate through this soil quite quickly. So you are not going to have waterlogged soil. In dry weather, it does not become too hard for the roots to work through.

**Calcareous/Lime/Chalk Soils** – these soils are very deficient in plant food. They are also very shallow. They are often very lacking in humus and so you have to add as much organic matter as possible every year in order to keep them productive.

These soils are calcareous by reason of their chalk and limestone content. The fine particles of these substances are going to be found every time the land is cultivated.

When wet, these soils are often very sticky and unpleasant and so they are difficult to work during rainy season.

In dry season, they are disappointing because they do not retain plenty of water easily. Because of the lime content present you are going to have plants with leaves which are bright yellow in color. This is called chlorosis. This yellowing does not or may not affect the plants in any other way but it usually means stunted growth.

Calcareous soils have the advantage that you do not need to add lime to them. Also, they are excellent for cabbages, because club root diseases do not flourish in such a soil.

In many parts of the world, chalky clays are known as marl. They are therefore treated in the same way as you would treat ordinary clay soil. That means you do not need heavy dressings of lime in order to fertilize the soil beforehand.

**Peat Soils** – these soils are totally devoid of lime. That is why they are called sour soil. This sourness is produced by the decaying of vegetable matters present as soils such as these contain more than 20 per cent of humus.



Peats have usually been derived from marshes and boggy land. These areas have been in existence for thousands of years and you can imagine the amount of animal matter which has been decomposing in this soil during this time. No wonder it is considered to be one of the most fertile soils available to you, especially when you are using Peat as organic fertilizer.

They are often low-lying soils and so they may be waterlogged and they may also require continuous draining.

The mossy lands of Ireland are well-known for their peaty soil. Brown peat is more easy to cultivate than bog like black and heavy peat. Once you have worked them well and added some lime to them, they are excellent for growing rhododendrons and azaleas which prefer this sort of soil.

## **Soil Color and Fertility**

Soils are going to differ in color depending upon the amount of humus that they contain. Moisture is also going to play its part in giving the soil, a darker or lighter appearance and texture.

Soils that are full of organic matter are usually dark in color. These warm up quickly. That is why it is important to dig in plenty of well-rotted organic

matter into the soil every year so that it can decompose at its own speed. Soil with little organic matter is lighter in texture and color. When I was young I lived in areas which was very rich in iron content. This soil was beautiful red in color and was very fertile. I have never seen soil as productive and fertile as that ever since.



Along with this iron oxide content, this soil also was very fertilized with organic matter from the mountains and that is why we had the most exquisite flowers and huge amounts of freshly grown organic vegetables growing in our gardens with minimum of effort.

# Humus



Consider humus to be a decaying rotting brownish-black jelly or jam present on the surface of any place where there is plenty of vegetative matter. This is normally produced when dying leaves, twigs, and other vegetative matter begin to decompose. Thanks to the activity of the bacteria present in nature, it is going to take a couple of months for all the dying leaves to turn into good compost. This is humus.

You can also produce humus from the dung, which has been purposely added in soil and from roots and leaves of plants which grew in that radicular field formerly

One of the reasons that organic farmyard manure is so popular in cultivation is that it not only is a plant food to the soil, but it also increases the humus content of the soil. Humus tends to act as a sponge and is going to hold all the moisture from the soil to be kept ready for the plant roots.

Humus itself produces a large portion of the nutrients needed by the plant. Also, the acids and the gas which are given off during the decaying process of the organic matter are going to help preserve nutrients, and free them.



These would otherwise not be available to the plant under different circumstances. So thanks to humus, Mother Nature has provided plants with an everlasting source of natural nutrients and food.

So when you have a choice of soils, choose a light soil in preference to a heavy one. Clay soils can be improved by adding organic refuse, straw and manure, sand, and organic material like rotting leaves and even spent hops. Anything which is natural and which you are not using can be plowed back into your land. It is going to turn into rich and beneficial fertilizer.





## Preparation of the Soil

Our first priority is of course going to be soil, which is deeply cultivated and well-drained. Like I said before, annuals hate waterlogging, so either the soil should be able to absorb moisture, or the water should be able to drain away freely.

If the soil is light, you will need to put in well-rotted farm manure. Heavy soil is going to need strawy manure. A barrow full is going to do for every 10 yd.<sup>2</sup>. Make sure that this manure is mixed in well with the topsoil.

The soil should be dug a long time before the seeds are to be sown, so that it may settle down and become firm. You are also going to give the manure enough of opportunity to decompose and give the soil the necessary nutrients which are going to help the plant grow and flourish in your garden.

Traditionally the surface of the soil used to be treaded, and then given a light raking over afterwards. This prevented the seed from disappearing into deep soil pockets.



**The preparation of a very fine soil- also known as tilth- before sowing the seeds is extremely important.**

If the ground is known to be poor a good fish manure should be applied to the surface. This is going to be at 3 – 4 ounces to the square yard. This should be forked in lightly at least once a month before you start sowing seeds. Apart from highly fertile soils, we also lived in areas where the soil was extremely dry and low in nutrients. We did not have fish manure around so we asked the nearby villagers to provide us with organic cow dung. This is, of course, more powerful and has been one of the best organic fertilizers used traditionally in the East, for millenniums. And the produce of that supposedly poor soil could win exhibitions.

If you do not have the time to allow the soil to cook for a month, you will need to do a top dressing of fish manure, when the plants are several inches high.

You can also give the soil a dressing of lime, especially if the ground is acid.(Peaty or sour ground.) Remember that there are some annual plants that do not like lime.

There is no need for you to sow the seed deeply or thickly. Most of the annual seeds are very small and so they just need to be covered with a layer of soil. I remember the bossy head gardener of my childhood, mixing sand with seed, to be sure of sowing them thinly enough over the given areas. After that he used to pick up clumps of sand/seed and sprinkle it all over the already prepared bed. The proportion was 10 handfuls of sand to one handful of seeds.

After sowing either rake the bed over shallowly or else you can sift a little soil over the seeds by means of a fine mesh sieve. Pat the ground lightly with the back of a spade.



Sow the annual plants on a fine dry day when the soil is in a friable condition. Sow these seeds in rows a foot apart in patches or clumps. Make sure that the clumps are not too close together.

A plant that is going to grow to a foot in height really needs a square foot of space in which to grow to perfection. So the clumps will have to be sown a good distance away from each other.

It is quite a good plan to scratch with a pointed stick rings of various shapes in which you are going to sow seeds of different types.

Whatever the width of the border, the smaller plants may be sown, generally speaking, to the front and the taller varieties at the back. Occasionally some of the taller varieties should be allowed to come to the front in order to prevent the outline becoming monotonous and boring. Dwarf corn flowers are compact. Larkspurs are branching.



**Amaranthus caudatus- Love Lies Bleeding -is a drooping plant.**

So using examples of dwarf, compact, branching, upright and drooping plants, you can make up different combinations in your garden beds.

## Best Time for Seed Sowing

As every gardener knows, the best time for sowing seeds is after the frost, especially during the spring. This works best for annuals. Any time from the end of March to the end of April, depending on the weather is going to be the time when you are going to be sowing your seeds. This time can vary depending on the soil, season and area. In some places the frost does not end till March/April. So the sowing is going to be done in early May, which means that you need to look at the season, look at the sun and then do the sowing.

Also, you can do the sowing in autumn. The plants are going to grow better and they are going to shower much earlier, in consequence. In this case, the seed is sown anytime between mid-August to mid-September, depending on the area.

It may not be possible to sow all the varieties of annuals in this way, as many of them are killed by the frost in the winter, or by the damp. That is why look at nursery websites pertaining to your area so that you can get to know all about all those plants which normally live through a harsh winter. These can blossom well in your garden, even in the winter.





## The Thinning Process

This is a very important gardening operation, and it has to be done very early.

Annuals are transplanted quite successfully by even the most amateur of gardeners. Some varieties are easier to move than others. As the seed is cheap, one does not need to move or transplant seedlings, very often but this may need to be done to fill up areas where you have missed seed growth here and there in the bed.

Marigolds, corn flowers and Nigella transplant really well.



So now we come to the maintenance of the garden. How are we going to recognize and all strong weeds, especially in their young stages? To help you recognize the plants, especially if you are an amateur, just sow a few seeds in boxes and grow them in a frame or even indoor so that they come up in the fortnight or so, before those grown outside.



You are going to recognize what they look like in the box. So that means the thinning process is going to be aided by getting out the weeds as well as a number of plants, which you are going to be planning somewhere else.

Thinning normally has to be done when the soil is moist. I remember our gardener, putting his helpers to work after a shower to get rid of all the weeds because they could then be pulled up very easily. And as it rained 330 days out of 365, per year in that particular mountainous area those helpers never got time to sit down and relax!

So if you are doing the thinning in a dry time the root of the little plants that you leave in may get disturbed easily and damaged

Thin the plants early, thin them rigorously and thin them to a distance of half the height of the plant concerned when it is fully grown. You are going to have good plants that are going to flower freely.

When the annuals are sown in the autumn, you are going to get into a debate with the rest of the avid gardeners. Some say that they should be thinned before the winter sets in. Some say leave them in and allow them to grow throughout the winter. In my opinion they are going to succeed better if you leave the thinning until early in the spring. That is because they have had a chance to grow throughout the winter.

## Staking Your Annuals

The great mistake the number of beginners make when they are growing their annuals for the first time is that they do not stake their plants early enough. Another fault is staking with straight soldier like sticks like bamboos. Many people are going to say this statement is anathema, because bamboos have been used traditionally to stake out plants all over the East. The problem is that bamboos are all very well for plants with stiff and strong stems, but most of our annuals are feathery kinds and some of them are ones which branch out.

You may want to use twiggy sticks like Pea sticks in such cases. You need to have sticks which are flexible, and which can support your plant. If you put these sticks in very early on, the plants are going to grow among the twiggy bits. There are also going to get all the support in order to keep them upright.

Apart from this, the twigs are easily hidden. Bamboos may look aesthetically pleasing in furniture, but they are not very pleasing in a garden, – especially when they have been cut into two as supports, and tied with pieces of colored string – and distract from your uninterrupted view of a beautifully flowering annual. So the beauty of the plant is not going to be marred by a not so beautiful straight-backed support.

Sunflowers can have long straight twigs and you can allow climbers like Sweet Peas to climb up tall twiggy sticks.



**This staking is being done for young tomatoes.**

## Why Mulch?

Mulching is another important gardening process which has to be a part of every gardener's knowledge arsenal. The movement of the water in the soil is both upwards and downwards. The excess water is gradually going to percolate through and if the drainage is perfect, it is going to be carried away.

Because of the porosity of the soil, the water in it is also going to rise. When the water gets to the top of the soil, the heat of the sun may evaporate it. The wind is also going to carry it away. In this way, the soil is going to dry out, especially in the hot weather.

As a gardener you want to prevent this evaporation of the soil moisture. The operation is known as mulching. This is done by two forms – you are either going to cultivate the top inch of soil regularly. This is known as dust mulching. This dust mulching is normally done by hoeing.



Preparing the soil with a hoe before seeding is the normal gardening procedure, but hoeing is going to be continued at regular intervals, even after the plants have been sown.

You can also apply organic matter like compost, straw, peat, rotting leaves, and lawn – mowings on this topsoil layer. Both of these methods are going to have the same effect in helping to keep the water where it is required, and that is around the roots of the plants in the soil.

Mulching is normally carried out during the summer months for this particular purpose. That is because there is no logic in putting in rotting material at the base of trees and plants in the late autumn or winter, especially when we are not bothered about moisture evaporation from the soil in these seasons.

In the same way, remember not to start mulching, very early in the spring because you need to get some time for the soil to get warm. Once you see that the soil is dry and the moisture content is low, start mulching.



## Cultivation and Maintenance

The ground needs to be hoed continuously in order to keep it free from weeds as well as for dry mulching.

You may also need to do a little bit of hand weeding.<sup>1</sup> After you have done all the maintenance operations, like staking and the cutting off the dead blooms, you need to hoe the ground or rake it.

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<sup>1</sup> I normally like looking for bargains for gardening tool lots with a price range of less than two dollars! Also look for international free shipping. It is going to take a while for you to get your products, but you are going to get good stuff at an economical rate. Here is one –

[http://www.ebay.com/itm/3pcs-Reinforced-Gardening-Round-Sharp-Shovel-Rake-w-Wooden-Handle-Tools-Set-/261730599802?pt=US\\_Garden\\_Tools&hash=item3cf05c037a](http://www.ebay.com/itm/3pcs-Reinforced-Gardening-Round-Sharp-Shovel-Rake-w-Wooden-Handle-Tools-Set-/261730599802?pt=US_Garden_Tools&hash=item3cf05c037a)

In the same way, invest in a pair of gardening gloves to keep your hands dirt and soil free.

[http://www.ebay.com/itm/NEW-1-Pair-Gardening-Women-Soft-Jersey-Garden-Gloves-One-Size-Popular-US1-JG-/391010165529?pt=US\\_Garden\\_Tools&hash=item5b0a05a319](http://www.ebay.com/itm/NEW-1-Pair-Gardening-Women-Soft-Jersey-Garden-Gloves-One-Size-Popular-US1-JG-/391010165529?pt=US_Garden_Tools&hash=item5b0a05a319)





This is going to provide a dust mulch. It is also going to get rid of all the foot marks on your gardening bed!

Do not allow the plants to go to seed. That means cutting off the dead flowers. The moment they appear just snip them off.

It is not a bad plan after one batch of flowering to cut the plant back. This means that it is going to throw out new shoots and flower again.

## Watering your Plants



**A light sprinkling is good enough for vegetables, but flowers normally like well soaked ground.**

Never give your plants light sprinklings with a water can. Instead soak the ground, well either in the evening or early in the morning.

Give your plants a mulching of lawn – mowings, rotting leaves and other organic compost, the moment the hot weather starts. This is going to save both watering and hoeing.

I heard one of my gardening friends complaining that the annuals seem to be coming to their best just when they were going on their summer holiday! And when they came back, those poor annuals looked so useless and dead.

Here are some tips in which you can keep your plants well watered, when you are going to be away for a while. Water all of your plants so that the soil gets a bit waterlogged. That means you do not have to worry about the moisture content of the soil for the next 4 to 5 days. Mulch all the plants. This is going to keep the moisture in.

Drip irrigation pipes are a good way in which the soil can be kept moisturized over a long period of time.<sup>2</sup>

Here is a very useful URL where you can get even more tips about giving your plants that required 1 inch of water per week, especially when you are away on vacation time.

<http://www.miraclegro.com/smg/goART2/InfoHowTo/youre-on-vacation-but-your-plants-are-not/16500050>

I learned that plastic water bottle container trick from my mother, who normally gets rid of all the nonbiodegradable and tiresome soft drink bottles available in her vicinity by cutting them into two and making them into cactus containers or water containers with holes punched in at regular intervals with a nail. These are then half buried in the soil and so she can go off on long visits wherever she wants without bothering about coming back to moribund, staring and nearly defunct plants in her dear garden.

Here is another very useful tip – clip the plants back a little to prevent seeding the day before you go away so that by the time you come back, your border is going to be a blaze of color again.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ebay.com/itm/Drip-Irrigation-1-4-Poly-Tubing-50-ft-/261011473239?pt=LH\\_DefaultDomain\\_0&hash=item3cc57f0357](http://www.ebay.com/itm/Drip-Irrigation-1-4-Poly-Tubing-50-ft-/261011473239?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item3cc57f0357)

50 feet at less than five dollars? Not bad!

## List of Hardy annuals



**Calendulas**

<b>Name of the plant</b>	<b>Height</b>	<b>Color</b>
Sweet Alyssum	½ feet	Lilac and white
Agrostemma	2 ½ feet	Crimson
Asperula	1 ½ feet	Blue
Candytuft	1 foot	Lilac, rose, white and Crimson
Bartonia aurea	1 foot	Bright yellow
Calliopsis	1 ½ foot	Yellow
Calendula	2 feet	Apricot, yellow, orange
Chrysanthemum – annual	1 – 3 feet	Yellow, Crimson, white, bronze, etc.

Centranthus	2 feet	Red
Single and double Clarkia	2 feet	Red, rose, pink, white
Collinsia	1 foot	Lilac White Rose
Cornflower	One – 3 feet	Blue, purple, rose, white
Erysimum	1 ½ feet	Yellow and orange
Single and double Eschscholtzia	1 feet	White, Crimson, lemon and orange
Godetia	Up to 2 feet	Pink, white and Crimson
Gamolepis	½ feet	Yellow
Helicrysum	2 ½ feet	Orange, yellow, pink, violet, white
Jacoea	1 foot	Crimson, white, purple
Larkspur	3 feet	Red, white, rose, blue, mauve
Leptosiphon	1/2 feet	Lavender and purple
Lavatera	4 feet	Pink, red and white
Limnanthes	½ feet	Yellow and white
Linaria	1 foot	Purple, pink, white and yellow
Linum grandiflorum	1 foot	Red and blue
Love-Lies-Bleeding	2 feet	Red
Annual lupins	2 feet	Blue, white, Scarlett, yellow, pink
Mignonette flowers	1 foot	Lilac White and red



Single and double nasturtium	dwarf and climbing variety	Red, yellow and rose
Nigella	1 ½ feet	Blue and white
Single and double portulaca	½ feet	White, Scarlet, primrose and Crimson
oenothera Drummondii	1 foot	Yellow
Phacelia	1 foot	Blue
Saponaria	½ – 2 feet	White and pink
Scabious flowers	21/2 feet	Yellow, white, mauve and red
Silene	¾ – 1 ½ feet	Rose and pink
Everlasting Statice	1 ½ feet	Blue, rose
Sweet sultan	1 ½ feet	Yellow, white and mauve
Ursinia	¾ feet	Orange
Viscaria	1 foot	Crimson and pink
Xeranthemum	2 feet	White, yellow and purple
Climbers – convolvulus, sweet peas, nasturtium, Canary Creeper		

## Half Hardy Annuals

There are a large number of half Hardy annuals which, with a little bit of care and attention are going to make a bold show in your garden, all through the summer. Sometimes, they may give you a bit of problem, especially if your area is subject to harsh winter frost. That is when they are grown under cloches or in green houses , in a frame or in glass houses.

Here are some of the most easily available half Hardy and attractive annuals.



**Popping balsam seed pods is such fun!**

Name	Height	Color
Everlasting Acroclinium		White and rose
Ageratum	1 foot	Blue and white
Antirrhinum	1 – 2 ½ feet	white, yellow, pink and red

Balsam	1 ½ feet	Rose, scarlet, white
Arctotis	1 foot	Yellow mauve white
Brachycome	1 ½ feet	White, purple, blue and mauve
Celosia	2 feet	Crimson yellow and rose
China aster	1 ½ – 2 feet	Blue, scarlet, rose, pink and white
Cosmos	2 ½ feet	Orange, white and yellow
Dimorphotheca	1 foot	Yellow, orange and white
Gilia	1 foot	White violet and scarlet
French marigold and African marigold	1 foot	Violet white and scarlet
Martynia	2 feet	Mauve
Nemesia	1 ¼ feet	Blue, white, orange, pink and carmine
Nicotiana scented	2 ½ feet	Red and white
Perilla	1 ½ feet	Foliage is beautiful and bronze in color
Petunia single and double	1 – 2 feet	Various colors
Phlox drummondii	1 ¼ feet	Scarlet, rose, white, yellow, violet and other cultivars
Rhodanthe	1 foot	Pink and white
Salpiglossis	2 feet	Various
Single and double Schizanthus	2 feet	White, pink, red and yellow variegated varieties

Everlasting Statice	2 feet	Mauve, white and yellow
Ten Weeks Stocks	2 feet	All colors
Verbena	1 foot	Rose, blue, Scarlet
Zinnias	3 feet	Crimson, purple, scarlet, violet, white, large

So if you are a beginner, and you are worried about which annuals to use for different purposes, it is going to be very useful to group the plants together under different headings.

**Hardy edging plants** – dwarf Gilias, dwarf Saponaria, Asperula, Alyssum, dwarf Candytuft, Phacelia, Virginia stock, Ursinia, Silene, Leptosiphon, Dwarf Nasturtium, Nemophilla, etc.

**Varieties Which You Can Sow in the Autumn** – Cornflower, Candytuft, marigold, Larkspur, Nigella, chrysanthemum, and Sweet sultan.

**Annuals Suitable for Cutting Purposes –**

Cornflower, Candytuft, marigold, Nigella, Larkspur, Clarkia, godetia, gypsophila, Saponaria and Sweet sultan

**Annuals for autumn blooming –**

Your main priority is the gardener is to try to get plenty of Bloom in the autumn. The following annuals, if sown in the beginning of July are going to flower freely at the late end of the year before the winter comes in.

Cornflower, candytuft, Allysum, Godetia, Gypsophila, Nasturtium, Virginia Stock, Sweet Sultan, Limnanthes

**Half Hardy Annuals for Edging Your Border**

Portulaca, French marigold, Phlox Drummondii, nemesia, Ageratum, Arctotis.

## Knowing More about Biennials



The true description of a biennial plant is that it completes its lifecycle within the second year of germination. That means it is going to grow, flower and seed all during the second year.

When they are sown in one year, they are going to bloom, ripen their seed and die in the following year.

A large number of other plants like Canterbury Bells , Hollyhocks, Sweet Williams and wallflowers are actually perennials. But they are grown as biennials as they are best treated as such by a number of gardeners down the ages.



So how are you going to find out the difference between annuals and biennials, and how are you going to stop confusing them with perennials? Well, any annuals which seed themselves and then come up of their own accord, the next year can be treated in the biennials and perennials Category! It is going to take a little bit of experience for you to know which plants are annuals and which are biennials.

## **Sowing the seeds**

Seeds of various biennials can be sown during the months of May, June and July. The time of sowing is going to differ according to the type of soil, the locality and the season. It is not necessary for you to sow them under glass, unless you think that the plant varieties are very fragile. Just draw out shallow drills on prepared soil 1 foot apart. The moment the plants are 3 inches high, you can plant them out into permanent borders or beds.<sup>3</sup>. These are going to transplant really easily, especially after a shower.

## **Preparing the Ground**

Dig the ground to a good depth and drain it well. Dig in a heavy dressing of farmyard manure deeply. Do not give the young plants too much of nitrogen or else they are going to find it difficult to live through a hard frosty winter.

You can cover some biennials like stocks with cold frames, or place them under glass in the winter, depending on the area in which you are planting them. Earlier sowing in the spring is preferable to later sowing in the autumn.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ebay.com/itm/RAPITEST-MINI-SEEDMASTER-GARDEN-PLANT-FLOWER-SOWER-SEED-PLANTER-STARTER-SEEDER-/281531353724?pt=US\\_Garden\\_Tools&hash=item418c938a7c](http://www.ebay.com/itm/RAPITEST-MINI-SEEDMASTER-GARDEN-PLANT-FLOWER-SOWER-SEED-PLANTER-STARTER-SEEDER-/281531353724?pt=US_Garden_Tools&hash=item418c938a7c) is rather amusing.

Whatever will they think up next? I could get the same results by using a large sized Vet injection syringe, with a nozzle large enough to allow one seed to pass at a time and the nozzle length eight – 12 inches, depending on the depth of the soil.



### List of Popular Biennials

Name	Height	Color
Canterbury bells, single and double	2 ½ feet	Blue, rose, white and mauve
Brompton Stocks	2 feet	Rose, pink, violet, yellow, mauve and white
Hollyhocks	Six – 8 feet	Red, yellow, flame colored, pink

Foxgloves	Two – 6 feet	Mauve and white
Gilia	1 foot	Scarlet
Honesty	2 feet	White and purple
Sweet William	2 feet	Various colors
Antirrhinums	Depending on the variety	Depending on the cultivar
Penstemon	2 ½ feet	Pink, red and purple
Sweet Rocket	2 feet	Purple and white
Poppy, Iceland and Sunbeam varieties, single and double	1 foot	Yellow, orange, white, red and different colors depending on the cultivars
Wallflower	1 ½ feet	Brown, yellow, red, orange, white and mixed colors.

## Conclusion

This book has given you quite a lot of knowledge about annuals and biennials. So if you are an amateur gardener, you would want to start planting right now, so that your garden looks really good throughout the year.

Most of these tips are traditional and common sense tips. Many people do not bother much about gardening because they think it to be such a headache, especially when they have to maintain the garden and do the hoeing, raking and deweeding, three or four times every week. If you come in that category, it is better not to start a garden, because then you are going to feel really sad when you see your plants dying just because you could not be bothered to water them.

However, if you really want greenery around you and beautiful plants, do not take up the project of a full garden outdoors. You can grow a garden inside, in small containers. It is also easy to maintain this small garden.



But I would always suggest learning a new activity which allows you to get out in the sun and fresh air. It also helps you feel that you have achieved something at the end of the day. Who knows, one fine day you might find yourself becoming one of the avid gardeners of your neighborhood.

Live Long and Prosper!

## Author's Bio

**Dueep Jyot Singh** is a Management and IT Professional who managed to gather Postgraduate qualifications in Management and English and Degrees in Science, French and Education while pursuing different enjoyable career options like being an hospital administrator, IT,SEO and HRD Database Manager/ trainer, movie , radio and TV scriptwriter, theatre artiste and public speaker, lecturer in French, Marketing and Advertising, ex-Editor of Hearts On Fire (now known as Solstice) Books Missouri USA, advice columnist and cartoonist, publisher and Aviation School trainer, ex-moderator on Medico.in, banker, student councilor ,travelogue writer ... among other things!

One fine morning, she decided that she had enough of killing herself by Degrees and went back to her first love -- writing. It's more enjoyable! She already has 48 published academic and 14 fiction- in- different- genre books under her belt.

When she is not designing websites or making Graphic design illustrations for clients , she is browsing through old bookshops hunting for treasures, of which she has an enviable collection – including R.L. Stevenson, O.Henry, Dornford Yates, Maurice Walsh, De Maupassant, Victor Hugo, Sapper, C.N. Williamson, “Bartimeus” and the crown of her collection- Dickens “The Old Curiosity Shop,” and so on... Just call her "Renaissance Woman" ) - collecting herbal remedies, acting like Universal Helping Hand/Agony Aunt, or escaping to her dear mountains for a bit of exploring, collecting herbs and plants and trekking.

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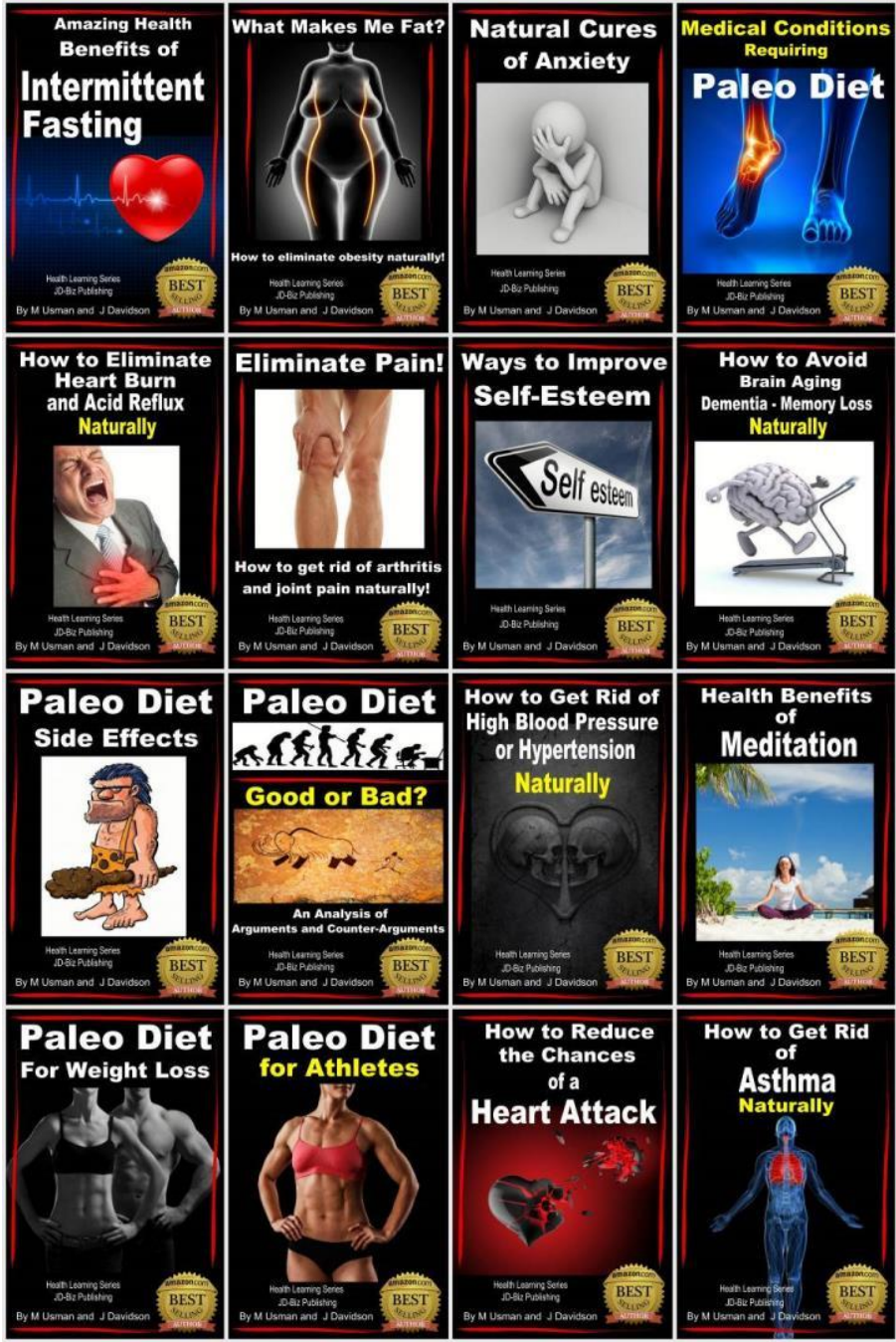
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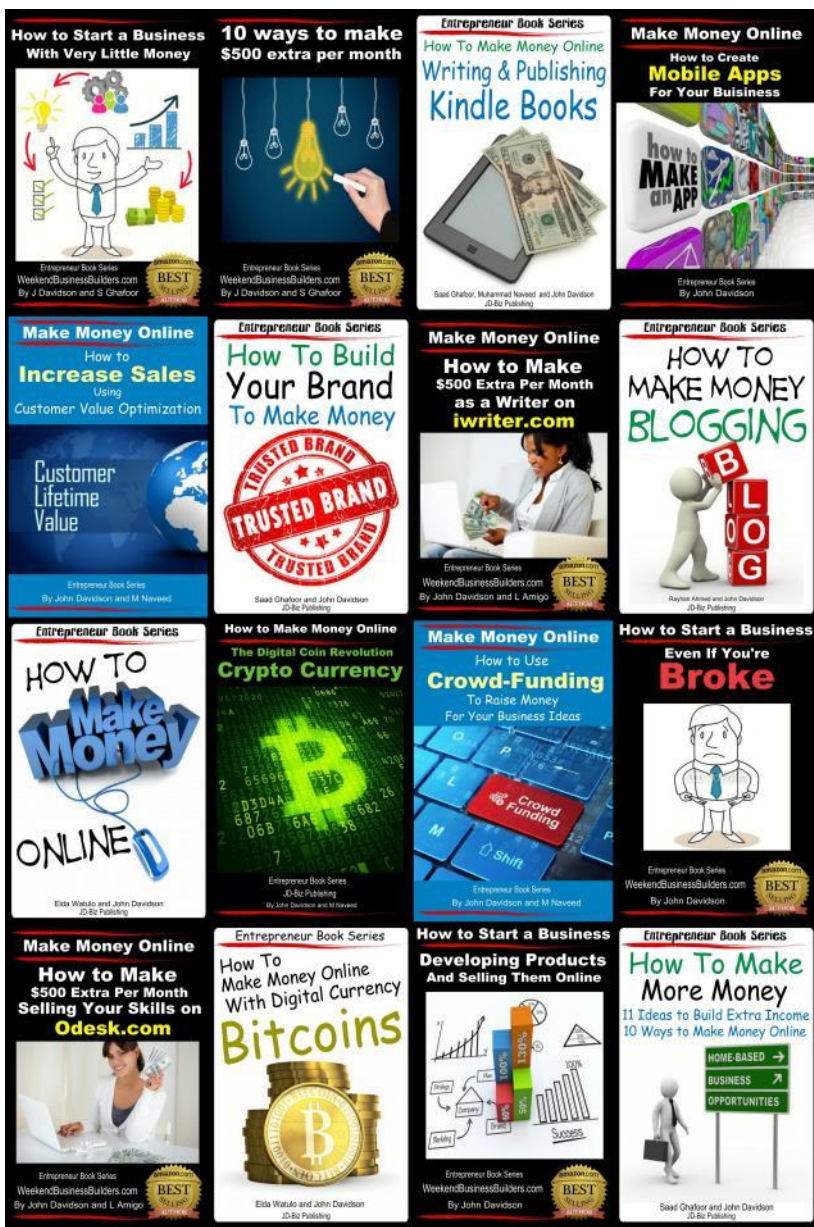




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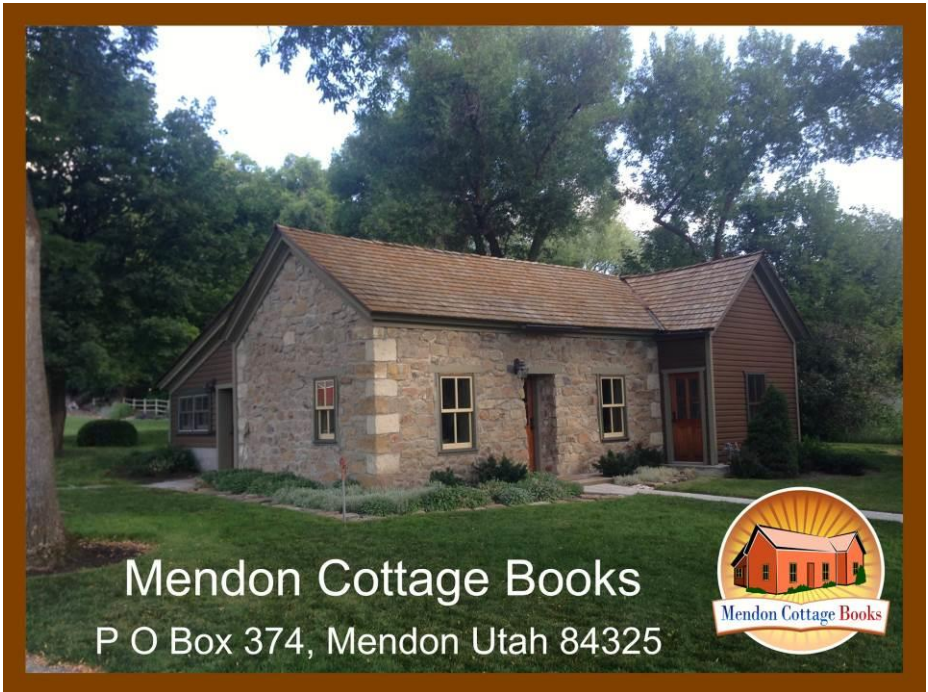


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