12 Potted Spring Flowers That Can Survive a Late Frost

As we turn the corner on winter, the urge to head over to our local nurseries to buy colorful spring flowers gets more real by the day. But, there’s nothing worse than dropping money on potted plants only to wake up one morning and find they’ve all wilted and died due to an overnight frost, which can occur even into late May in some areas. You can keep an eye on frost in your area by plugging your zip code into the Farmer’s Almanac frost calculator, or even better, choose smartly when buying spring blooms, according to Vermont-based gardening blogger Charlie Nardozzi, author of The Complete Guide to No-Dig Gardening. “The good news is there are many flowers that can survive a late season cold spell and last even through fall,” Nardozzi says. You just need to know which ones to shop for, and so see our suggestions ahead. 01 of 12 Pansies These low growing, brightly colored yellow, blue, purple, red, and white perennials have heart-shaped, overlapping petals that can withstand frost and even snow. They thrive in partially shady locations in a well-drained, moist soil. “ If they happen to dieback during a really hot summer, they can reemerge in the fall,” Nardozzi notes. “They’re also self-sowing, which means they can drop seeds before they die, geminate, and reappear in the spring.” 02 of 12 Calibrachoa Calibrachoa, a multicolored annual, can live from spring through fall and grows well in containers, either alone or combined with other flowers. “They’ll need to be watered once the top inch of the soil dries out and don’t do well in extreme wind and hot sunlight until they become established,” Venelin Dimitrov, a horticulturist and a Senior Product Manager at Burpee, says. 03 of 12 Primrose Rosettes of ruffled green leaves produce spikes of brightly colored pink, yellow, and white perennial flowers in the spring. “Primrose, which self-sow, can be an annual or perennial and thrive in a partial shade,” Nardozzi says. “Expect them to live from spring through fall if the flowers are in a well-drained, moist soil.” 04 of 12 Snapdragon These pretty stalks of brightly colored red, orange, white, purple, peach, and blue annual flowers prefer full sun and a fertile soil along with afternoon shade, especially during hot summer days when they may stop flowering. “But, even if snapdragons dieback, they can bloom again in the fall,” Nardozzi encourages, and he suggests dwarf varieties for containers. 05 of 12 Dianthus This perennial flower, also known as pinks, has grey, spiky foliage and stalks of white, pink, and red colored flowers spring through fall. “They’ll last all summer if you weed, water, and keep them in a sunny spot,” Nardozzi shares. 06 of 12 Coreopsis Coreopsis are both annual and perennial flowers, similar in look to daisies. Their petal colors include red, pink, white, and yellow—many with dark brown or maroon centers. “Plant in a full sun location and they’ll last you from spring through summer,” Dimitrov notes. 07 of 12 Sweet Alyssum This creeping, annual flower has small white, pink, blue, and rose-colored flowers and will thrive in full sun and a well-drained soil. They’ll last from spring through fall and can self-sow, even in a container. “Cut back the foliage in summer if things begin to look ratty and the plant will regrow and your flowers will bloom again,” Nardozzi advises.