ANNUAL INSTALLATION

**H**igh quality annual color displays start a design and with the proper preparation of annual beds and proper annual installation techniques. In order to achieve optimum performance with annuals, the following guidelines must be followed:

* Plant choice! With sound horticulture skills, design your annual color beds with appropriate plant types. Planting design is the foundation for all annual color beds. Use the right plants in the right place. Considering the following:

1. Environmental conditions
2. Its microclimate
3. Planting zone
4. Sun or Shade
5. Watering requirements
6. Irrigation systems
7. Patterns
8. Plant height (e.g. relative to signage for example)

* Annual color bed prep:

1. Remove all excess debris from the bed (mulch, plant material, roots, weeds, rocks etc.)
2. Consider soil testing to achieve a pH balance between 6-7 (neutral). Add lime to raise the pH or sulfur to lower the pH.
3. The soil must be loose and organic with adequate drainage
4. Add organic compost or amendments and incorporated into the bed to a depth of 10” - 12” (if the bed size is larger than desired, remove soil prior to adding amendments)
5. Insure there is a 3”-4” trench along all hard surfaces (curbs, walks)
6. Rake freshly tilled bed to achieve a gentle slopped appearance in an effort to “display” your newly installed color. Flat beds are not attractive with poor drainage.

Annual installation starts with fertilizing the beds before setting out the plants.

**First:** The flats of annuals should be hand watered thoroughly before planting.

**Second:** A pre-measured amount of *Plant Health Care* is added to the bed and lightly

raked in after it has been applied.

**Third:** A 14-26-6 fertilizer is put out at a rate of 4 lb. per 1,000 sq. ft. This is equal to

two 16 oz. cups full of fertilizer sprinkled lightly across a 1,000 sq. ft. bed.

**Fourth:** The plants should then be set out in straight, staggered rows and spaced correctly (pending plant type and desire). The first row should be set approximately 12” from the bottom of the bed. Pay close attention to the pre-determined planting design and follow it as closely as possible. (It is important to set out the bed before planting because it is easier to make adjustments before the plants are in the ground.)

Once the entire bed is set out per planting design, planting may begin.

**First:** Remove the annual from the pot and loosen the root ball by squeezing it lightly.

**Second:** Install the plant with the top of the root ball level with the soil. (The only

exception to this rule is when planting *kale* or *cabbage,* these varieties should be

planted up to the top two or three whorls of leaves.)

**Third:** Avoid stepping into the bed while planting. If it is unavoidable, do not step on

any plants and rake out any footprints. This important in order to insure that the

mulch will sit evenly on the bed.

**Fourth:** Mulch is applied after planting in the form of small mini-bark nuggets or shredded

hardwood mulch. The mulch acts as a weed barrier, helps retain soil moisture

and gives the bed a decorative look. It is applied evenly over the bed and then

dusted off of any plant material (DO NOT COVER PLANTS). Utilize the leftover mulch bags for clean-up (trash, pots, roots, rock etc).

**Fifth:** The beds should be watered by hand or the irrigation, if applicable. The irrigation must be set to run before leaving the property. The soil should be moist at finger’s depth and it should be checked in several locations. Water once every 3 days during the first 2 weeks following installation (1” of watering is the desired goal), then once a week should be sufficient pending weather.

HOME PAGE

Annual color is a science and a practice of growing and cultivating flowers for decorative and aesthetic purposes. Annual color is a branh of horticulture that deals with the study of flowreing and ornamental plants, their propagation, cultivation and management. There is a wide range of annual color activities included in designs for your outdoor gardens. Landscape designers and landscape horticulturalists use annual color to create seasonal displays throughout the year. Come and explore ways for you to have a successful annual color display "For You!"