

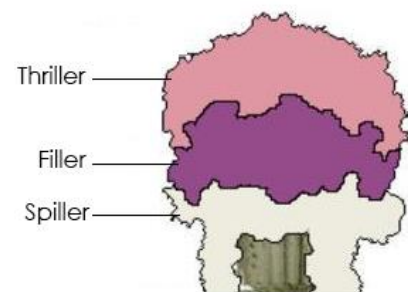
A Guide to Seasonal Flowers

An easy way to add more color and texture is with seasonal flowers, or annuals. They will add color to any bare spot in your landscape. A grouping of pots or containers at your front entrance of your home, rear patio or outdoor entertainment space, gives each space a unique, colorful touch. However, before you buy all these seasonal flowers at your local greenhouse, let's talk about a few of the basics when it comes to seasonal plantings...

When to plant...Here in Northern Michigan, our rule is usually no planting before Mother's Day! Depending on your location, you may be able to plant a bit sooner. It is important to consider the ground temperatures, temperatures at night, and rainfall. Heavy rainfall can drown out young annuals quickly. Try not to be seduced by the flats upon flats of annuals soon to be appearing at your local stores. While they look healthy in the store, it is way too soon to plant in the ground or even in a planter! A good tell if it is time to plant is to look at your perennial plants-Hosta for example- if they have not really started to grow yet, it is probably too early to plant your annuals.

Right Plant, Right Place... You may have heard this before pertaining to perennial or herbaceous plants, however the same rule applies to annual plants. There are plants made for full sun, part sun, or full shade, as well as plants that are drought tolerant, and plants that require consistent watering. So, be sure to assess the location you wish to spruce up, and don't be afraid to ask questions about the plants you chose before bringing them home.

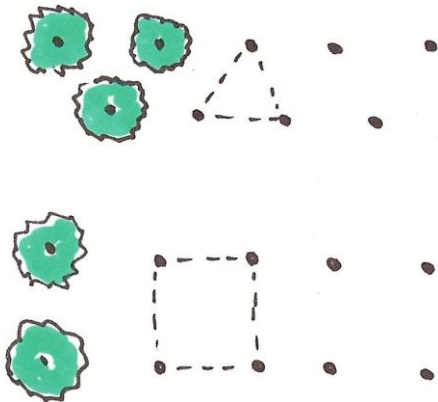
Thriller, Filler, Spiller... To explain this, lets paint a picture. You have a large round planter you wish to place in the corner of your paver patio. But, where do you start when choosing plants? When designing your planter, start from the inside out. The **thriller**,



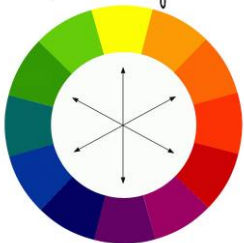
should be the center of the planter and tallest in height. Next, the **filler**, shorter than the thriller, but still should contain some height along with a “bushing” effect. The filler will void the gap between the thriller and the **spiller**. The spiller does exactly what you’re probably thinking, it spills out of your planter, draping over the edges.

Thriller, Filler, Spiller Plant suggestions for shady areas		Thriller, Filler, Spiller Plant suggestions for sunny areas	
Thriller	Astilbe, Foxglove (Digitalis), Coleus	Thriller	Ornamental grasses, cannas, cleome, hibiscus, geranium
Filler	Impatiens, hosta, clown plant, begonia, browallia	Filler	Euphorbia Diamond Frost, Lantana, Osteospermum
Spiller	Coral Bells, Fuschia, Ivy	Spiller	Petunia, Calibrachoa, Sweet Potato Vine, Verbena

Spacing...When you’re planting annuals in your garden, consider planting your seasonal flowers in groupings to maximize the show off the flower, rather than lining them up like soldiers along the planting bed edge. We suggest a triangle spacing in groupings, versus squared spacing. This is going to give you more character and diversity in your planting, giving the eye something different to look at as you scan over your plantings. Dare to be **bold** with your mass planting of seasonal flowers... you will notice the difference and your neighbors will too!



Complementary colors



Colors... Be **bold**! Don’t be afraid to plant a red begonia next to a yellow wave petunia. Add a massing of contrasting and complimentary colors so they stand out with your landscape or against other seasonal



flowers. Annual flowers only last one season, so... you only have a few months to enjoy them and the vibrant color they add to your landscape. The variety of seasonal flowers and colors may be overwhelming when you first walk in a greenhouse to select your flowers. Dare to be different. However, to make it less overwhelming, we might suggest you go into the greenhouse with a plan of the colors you might like to use that will complement each other and your landscape. The temptation to buy one of everything is very strong when you've spent six months of shoveling snow and creating a grand plan for your yard. However, too much variety of colors may serve to confuse the eye and distract from your landscape. Be **bold**, but keep it simple and your house will be the envy of the neighborhood!

Textures... Same rule applies here as it did with colors...don't be afraid to be **bold**. Annual plants can have fuzzy, shiny, pointy, round, thin, or thick leaves, stems, and petals. Mix it up! Seasonal planters are meant to stand out, so let them. Plant people in greenhouses all



over the world work tirelessly developing different varieties of every seasonal flower we have to give us the range we, as consumers, desire. Take advantage of their hard work. The wonderful thing about seasonal planters is if you don't like it this year, you know what you don't want to do again next year! So, don't be afraid to choose plants that you find to be cute, crazy, unique, or different.

Care and maintenance... Be sure to keep all containers well-watered. Fertilize your plants following the fertilizer's label directions. Most containers benefit from regular fertilization. Remember to deadhead and prune your plants. Some plants, like geranium and petunia, will produce more blooms faster if the old, dead blooms are removed. If the spiller plants get branches that are too long, you can prune or remove a ½ to 2/3 the total length of the stem and it will produce two to three new stems that grow more vigorously. Not all plants can be pruned, so make sure to research before you start cutting