

## Colorful Plant Beds for South Florida and Similar Climates

*Key words.* annuals, bedding plants, blooming plants

Low-growing plants with showy blooms are used to add a splash of color to an entranceway, walkway, porch, deck or patio. They provide high impact when used as mass plantings in raised or in-ground beds. These plants can also be grown in containers or fit into any garden or landscape. The plants covered in this publication can be grown in all of Florida and in many parts of the world. However, this publication is written from a South Florida perspective. Climate, soil, insect, disease and nematode pressures will invariably differ from region to region. These differences will determine the best plants for your growing conditions.

### Classification

Plant in color beds can be classified as either annuals, biennials or perennials. Annuals are most frequently used as bedding plants\*. Annuals are plants that germinate, flower, seed, and die in one growing season (not one year). In South Florida, there are two distinct growing seasons; a warm season lasting from May through October and a cool season lasting from November through April. Some annuals are adapted to growing in the warm season, others in the cool season and still others have the capability to grow all year. Annuals with a restricted growing season do poorly when grown outside their season and usually are removed from the garden because of natural decline. Annuals are temporary seasonal colors and should be replaced every 3 to 6 months even if it's a type capable of weathering both the warm and cool seasons.

Perennial plants for the color beds last for three or more years. However, some perennials may not be adapted for sustained growth in South Florida and are therefore best used as seasonal annuals. This is due to our intense disease and insect pressures, and high seasonal heat and humidity.

Most bedding plants are utilized for their showy flowers. However, there are a minority that are used for their colorful and attractive foliage or fruits (Table 4.)

### When to Plant

In South Florida, annuals that grow well in the cool season should be planted in the fall, winter, or early spring. Annuals that can tolerate high temperatures and humidity should be planted in late Spring or early Summer. Some bedding plants such as wax begonias, crown of thorns, and pentas may be planted year-round. Still others, such as gerbera daisy, periwinkle and zinnia, will perform year-round but are best planted before the rainy season. This allows them to become well established and more disease resistant before summer heat and rainfall begins.

### Where to Plant

All plants in the color beds should be planted so that they receive the correct amount of sun and irrigation. Most "sun loving" bedding plants grown during the summer in South Florida do best when they are shaded from the harsh afternoon sun.

### Fertilization, Irrigation and Grooming

Garden soils, especially in recently developed areas, are frequently infertile. Flower beds should be fertilized with a controlled release fertilizer such as Osmocote, Dynamite or other product. Controlled release fertilizers are ideal for Florida's sandy soils. Controlled release fertilizers can be incorporated uniformly throughout the soil before planting or applied to the soil surface in established plantings. Soluble fertilizers are useful for fast nutrient release to plants. Some communities have restrictions on the use of fertilizers during the rainy season usually defined as June through September. Deadheading (removal of fading or dead flowers) on some plants will keep them attractive and encourage more blooms. The faded blooms of most plants can be removed with finger and thumb. Others will require a clipper. Not all plants require deadheading.

\*A plant that has already been grown to blooming or near-blooming size before being planted out in a usually formal area for seasonal display of colorful flowers or foliage.

**Table 1. Blooming Plants for Year-Round Growth in South Florida**

Name/Longevity	Flower Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos	
African Bush-Daisy <i>Euryops chrysanthemoides</i> Perennial	Yellow	Full sun	Tender	September-March	When desired	2-4 feet tall. Year-round flowering. Requires pruning and pinching to maintain shape. Resilient plant that thrives in hot, dry weather.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>	<a href="#">Bed2</a>
Amaryllis <i>Hippeastrum x hybridum</i> Perennial	Red, orange, pink, white, striped colors	Partial shade	Hardy	October-January	When desired	1.5-2.5 feet tall. Blooms March, April or May depending on the variety. Relatively short flowering period. Cut off flowering stem about 2 inches above the bulb after blooming. Keep the leaves. They are needed for next season's bloom. Nearly evergreen. Usually the bulbs are left in the ground to multiply for several years. Thrives in alkaline soil.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Ground Level</a>	
Angelonia, Summer Snapdragon <i>Angelonia augustifolia</i> Perennial	White, pink, medium blue, purple, lavender	Full sun	Tender	February-May	When desired	1-2 feet tall. Flowers in flushes with little need to prune. Flowers resemble snapdragons. Usually used as an annual for both warm and cool seasons in South Florida. Over watering, low light, or low temperatures produce excess vegetative growth. Shear back lanky or scraggly plants by about half for heavy re-bloom 2-3 weeks later.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Flower</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>	
Balsam, Touch-Me-Not <i>Impatiens balsamina</i> Annual	Pink, red, coral, coral, orange, red, purple, white, near white	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	March-June	When desired.	1-3 feet tall. Used as border or as mass planting. Self-sows so deadhead to avoid volunteer seedlings. Can plant in summer if kept in the shade but does better in the winter months. Pinched to assure stocky plants. May get leggy after rains. Attractant for butterflies, bees, and birds.	<a href="#">Plants</a> <a href="#">Plant</a> <a href="#">Flowers &amp; Leaves</a>	
Begonia, wax Begonia <i>Begonia X semperflorens-cultorum</i> Perennial	Red, white, pink, salmon, yellow, bi-colors.	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	All year	When desired but will decline over summer	0.5-1 feet tall. Almost continuous flowering. Compact, herbaceous plant. Single or double flowers. Best in containers. After the stress of summer, plants have renewed vigor in the cool season. Subject to root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Flowers &amp; Leaves</a> <a href="#">Flowers of 2 types</a>	
Begonia, Begonia tuberous <i>Begonia tuberhybrida</i> Perennial	Red, white, pink, salmon, rose, bi-colors, picotee	Partial shade	Tender	October-January	When desired	Brittle, herbaceous plant. Needs frequent watering and fertilization but excess of each causes flower bud drop. Remove flowers before seeding to keep the plant blooming. Susceptible to powdery mildew and stem rot.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>	
Blue-Daze <i>Evolvulus glomeratus</i> Perennial	Blue	Full sun to dappled shade	Hardy	All year	One to two years	0.5-1.5 feet tall. Year-round flowering. Flowering is slightly reduced in partial shade. Flowers close late in the day. Susceptible to fungus disease during the rainy season. Keep foliage dry.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers &amp; Leaves</a>	

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Name/Longevity	Flower Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos
Blue Porterweed <i>Stachytarpheta jamaicensis</i> Florida native, Perennial	Blue	Full sun or partial shade	Tender	February- November	Should live 4-5 years	1.5-3 feet tall. Year-round bloom but less so in winter. Attracts butterflies. Cold sensitive yet quickly recovers. Leaves and inflorescence damage at 40°F.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>
Bolivian Sunset <i>Gloxinia sylvatica</i> ‘Bolivian Sunset’ Perennial	Orange, red	Dappled or Partial shade; AM sun, PM shade	Hardy	All year	When deteriorated	2-3 feet tall. Sub-shrub. Blooms fall to spring. May die down in the spring but then comes back in the rainy season. Spreads from rhizomes.	<a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Leaf &amp; Flower</a> <a href="#">Flowers &amp; Leaves</a>
Bulbine <i>Bulbine frutescens</i> Perennial	Yellow, bright orange	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	All year	When deteriorated	1.5-2 feet tall. Blooms continuously from mid-spring through winter. Evergreen, clump forming perennial. Leaves similar to onion leaf blade. Flowers 2-3 feet above foliage. Remove flower stems to encourage flower bloom. Drought tolerant. Survives to 20°F with some leaf damage. Attracts butterflies, bees, and birds.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>
Canna Lily <i>Canna</i> hybrids <i>C. flaccid</i> is a Florida native Perennial	Yellow, red, orange, pink	Full sun to light shade	Hardy	February- April	Lasts for several years	3-5 feet tall. Blooms from spring to fall. Herbaceous, rhizomatus, large leafed, perennials that grow well in moist, fertile soils. Not a true lily. Hardy to about 20°F. Susceptible to caterpillars. Seed pods can detract from appearance. Trim old blooms to encourage new growth. Dig and thin out rhizomes to rejuvenate plants.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Flower</a>
Crossandra, Firecracker Flower <i>Crossandra infundibuliformis</i> Perennial	Yellow, salmon, orange	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	March– September	November but many become perennials	1-2.5 feet tall. Upright sub-shrub. Inflorescences have overlapping bracts. Pinch growing tips to encourage compactness. ‘Orange Marmalade’ is a superior cultivar.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Plant</a>
Crown of Thorns <i>Euphorbia milii</i> Perennial	Red, yellow, white, pink, bi-color	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	All year	Lasts for several years.	1-3 feet tall. Height depends on cultivar. Abundant flowering all-year. Thorny stems. Needs fertile well-drained soil. High drought tolerance. Plant is poisonous if ingested. Attractant for butterflies, bees, and birds. Does not take well to pruning.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Flowers &amp; Leaves</a> <a href="#">Stems</a>
Dwarf Petunia, Mexican Bluebell <i>Ruellia brittoniana</i> Perennial	Purple, white, pink	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	February- November	Lasts for 3-4 years	0.8-1 feet tall. Nearly year-round flowering. Prolific summer bloomer. Forms compact clumps. May die back with hard frost and go dormant until spring. Optimal growth with regular irrigation and high phosphorous feeding. Potential snail and slug problem. ‘Compacta Katie’ and other cultivars are available.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>

**Table 1. Blooming Plants for Year-Round Growth in South Florida**

Name/Longevity	Flower Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos
Geranium <i>Pelargonium x hortorum</i> Annual	Red, pink, white, salmon, orange, violet, bi-colors	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	October-March	Normally removed in June but could last several years in light shade.	1-2 feet tall. Blooms all-year. Deadhead old flowers to encourage continual bloom and to extend life. Allow soil to dry out between watering. Great in containers. Botrytis blight is a potential problem.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>
Gerbera Daisy <i>Gerbera jamesonii</i> Perennial	White, red, orange, yellow, salmon, pink	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	November-June	When desired. Usually treated as a winter annual.	0.5-1 feet tall. Blooms all year. Plant with no visible stems. Susceptible to crown rot. Plant in the ground so that the crown is slightly above or level with the soil. Susceptible to powdery mildew during the winter. Very lightly damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Plant</a>
Lantana 'Gold Mound' <i>Lantana camara</i> Perennial	Yellow, yellow-orange	Full Sun	Hardy	February-October	When desired. Lasts 2-3 years.	2-4 feet tall. Flowers nearly year-round. Round, spreading, evergreen, perennial. Tolerates acid to alkaline soils. Medium salt tolerance. High drought tolerance. Water infrequently once established. Pest sensitive. Numerous other lantana cultivars exist. Be sure to plant only sterile cultivars. Attracts butterflies.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>
Lantana—Trailing <i>Lantana montevidensis</i> Perennial	Lavender, white	Full sun to light shade	Tender	February-October	When desired. Lasts 3 or more years.	1-2.5 feet all. Flowers nearly all year, but heaviest during the cool months. Flowering diminishes with shade. Acid to alkaline soil. High salt tolerance. Medium to high drought tolerance. Leaves discolored by 45°F and below temperatures.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>
Marigold <i>Tagetes spp.</i> Annual	Yellow, orange	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	February-December	3-4 months after planting; frost	1-2 feet tall. Flowers almost year-round. Bloom period lasting several months. Deadhead frequently for continuous bloom. Summer heat can cause a temporary decline in flowering. Not damaged by root-knot nematodes but susceptible to spider mites and defoliation by snails and slugs.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Plants</a>
Melampodium, Bush Zinnia <i>Melampodium paludosum</i> Annual	Yellow	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	All year	When desired	1-2 feet tall. Tolerates heat but not excessive moisture. Self seeding and can become weedy. Slugs and snails are potential problems.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers &amp; Leaves</a>



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Name/Longevity	Flower Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos
Yellow Shrimp Plant <i>Pachystachys lutea</i> Perennial	Yellow	Dappled or partial shade	Tender	All year	When desired	3-4 feet tall. Prefers well-drained acidic soil. Cold tender below 40°F. Will regrow after severe frost. Prune back hard annually to keep from getting too leggy. Typically massed in beds or used as background in mixed perennial planting. Low drought tolerance. Susceptible to scales and spider mites.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Plant</a> <a href="#">Flowers &amp; Leaves</a>
Zinnia <i>Zinnia spp.</i> Annual	White, yellow, orange, salmon, rose, crimson, scarlet, purple, blue, and more.	Full sun	Tender	February-April; September-October	4-6 months after planting.	0.5-3 feet tall. Many varieties. Coarse, upright, bushy growth. Requires well drained soil and good air circulation. Good salt tolerance. Powdery mildew is an occasional problem when humid; newer varieties resistant. Leaf spot during rainy season possible problem. Deadhead frequently.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>

**Table 2. Warm Season Blooming Plants for South Florida**

Name/Longevity	Flower Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos
Celosia <i>Celosia plumosa</i> Annual	Red, orange, pink, purple, yellow	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	April-November	When deteriorated	0.5-2 feet tall. Excellent cut flowers that hold color when dried. Premature bloom caused by cold temperatures or remaining in packs or flats for too long. Very heavily damaged by root-knot nematodes;	<a href="#">Plants</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>
Cleome, Spider Flower <i>Cleome hasslerana</i> Annual	White, rose, pink, lavender	Full sun	Tender	March-August	When deteriorated	1.5-3 feet tall. Blooms from winter to the end of the season. Flowers start to bloom at the bottom of the inflorescence and progress upward. Excellent background plant for beds and borders. Grow it in fertile, well-drained soils. Potential stem borer problem.	<a href="#">Plant</a> <a href="#">Flower1</a> <a href="#">Flower2</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>
Coreopsis, Tick-Seed <i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i> Florida native, Perennial	Yellow, red, pink, purple, orange, bi-colors	Full sun	Hardy	February-April	When desired	1-2 feet tall. Blooms June to September. Overwatering causes plants to topple over. Taller cultivar may need support. Remove faded blooms to prolong blooming. Will reseed. Not damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Plant</a> <a href="#">Flower1</a> <a href="#">Flower2</a>
Gaillardia, Blanket Flower <i>Gaillardia pulchella</i> Florida native, Annual	Red, orange, yellow, bi-colors	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	February-May	August	1-2 feet tall. Readily reseeds. Allow to drop seeds before pulling if volunteers (reseeded) plants are desired. Reseeded plants begin flowering in late February of the following year. Reseeded plants may need thinning. Very salt tolerant. Tolerates heat, drought and infertile soils. Very well-drained soils required. Not damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Bed3</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>
Globe Amaranth <i>Gomphrena globosa</i> Annual	Purple, white, pink, lavender, red, orange	Full sun	Tender	February-September	When desired	1-2 feet tall. Blooming period of 4-5 months. Long lasting from summer to fall. Tolerates poor, dry soil. Heat and drought tolerant. Should not be overwatered. Very lightly damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Plant</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>
Portulaca, Moss Rose <i>Portulaca grandiflora</i> Annual	Orange, pink, red, yellow, white, salmon, lavender, purple	Full sun	Tender	March-August	At first frost	0.5-0.75 feet tall. Small, low-growing succulent with small lance-shaped leaves. Flowers close at night or on cloudy days. Excellent ground cover for sunny dry areas. Drought tolerant but grows best with supplemental water. Well-drained soil a must. Lightly damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>
Purslane <i>Portulaca oleracea</i> Annual	Bright yellow	Full sun	Tender	March-May	November	0.5-1.5 feet tall. Makes an excellent groundcover for sunny dry areas. Will reseed. Very frost-tender. Lightly damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Bed3</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>

**Table 2. Warm Season Blooming Plants for South Florida**

Name/Longevity	Flower Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos
Torenia, Summer Pansy <i>Torenia fournieri</i> Annual	White, pink, purple, lavender, yellow	Full sun to dappled or partial shade	Tender	February-May, September-October	When leaves yellow	1-1.5 feet tall. May be planted for winter, spring and summer bloom but at its best in summer. Popular for growing in shady locations. Grows best with some shade during the hottest part of the year. Seedlings germinate everywhere close to the plant. Very lightly damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Flowers &amp;Leaves</a>



**Table 3. Cool Season Blooming Plants for South Florida**

Name/Longevity	Flower Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos
Ageratum, Tropical Whiteweed <i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> Annual	White, near-white, blue, lavender	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	February-March	July	1-1.5 feet tall. Keep soil evenly moist. Susceptible to whiteflies.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers1</a> <a href="#">Flowers2</a>
Alyssum, Sweet Alyssum <i>Lobularia maritime</i> Annual	White, pink, lavender, purple	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	October-March	May	0.5-1 feet tall. Flowers bloom profusely for 3-4 months for any one set of plants. Fragrant; needs well-drained soil. Excellent for edging and borders. New cultivars such as 'Snow Princess' and 'Silver Stream' are extremely vigorous and heat tolerant.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers1</a> <a href="#">Flowers2</a>
Black-Eyed Susan, Gloriosa Daisy <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> Florida native, Annual or Perennial	Yellow, orange, red, rust/bronze	Full sun	Hardy	February-April; October-November	July	2-3 feet tall. Spring bloomer. Annual or perennial depending on variety. Does not tolerate prolonged, wet, humid weather. Flowers are long-lasting and make excellent cut flowers. Not damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a>
Calendula, Pot Marigold <i>Calendula officinalis</i> Annual	Orange, yellow, white	Full to partial shade	Hardy	November-March	May	1-2 feet tall. Flowers are single or double. Performs well in containers and makes excellent cut flowers. Starts easily from seeds sown in the garden. Heavily damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Plant</a> <a href="#">Flower</a>
Delphinium <i>Delphinium elatum</i> Annual	White, blue, pink, purple	Full sun	Hardy	October-February	April	2.5-5 feet tall. Blooms fall through spring. Very heavily damaged by root-knot nematodes. Flowers are valued for cutting to make fresh-flower arrangements.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers1</a> <a href="#">Flowers2</a> <a href="#">Leaf</a>
Dianthus, Sweet William <i>Dianthus</i> spp. Annual	White, pink, salmon, purple, red, lavender, bi-colors	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	October-December	May	0.5-1.5 feet tall. Blooms continuously for several months. Stops flowering in April or May. Flowers borne singly or on inflorescence. Fringed petals, faintly fragrant. Does well in dry soil. Lightly damaged by root-knot nematodes. Various diseases.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers1</a> <a href="#">Flowers2</a>
Fan-Flower, Fairy Fan-Flower <i>Scaevola aremula</i> Annual	Blue, lilac, white	Full sun or dappled shade	Tender	All year	First frost or as desired	0.5-1.5 feet tall. Blooms from fall through spring. Heat and drought tolerant, sprawling, mat-forming habit. Good container plant. Tolerant of sandy soils and salt spray.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers1</a> <a href="#">Flowers2</a> <a href="#">Flowers &amp; Leaves</a>
Flat-Topped Goldenrod <i>Euthamia caroliniana</i> Florida native, Perennial	Bright yellow	Full sun	Hardy	All year	When desired	2-3 feet tall. Fall bloom. Can be used as an annual. Prefers mildly acidic soil. Protected species. Attractant for butterflies, bees, and birds. Water regularly.	<a href="#">Field</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Plants1</a> <a href="#">Plants2</a>

**Table 3. Cool Season Blooming Plants for South Florida**

Name/Longevity	Flower Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos
Foxglove, <i>Digitalis purpurea</i> Annual	Purple, white, pink, yellow, magenta, lavender	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	December-February	May	2-5 feet tall. Blooms fall through spring. Good background plant for beds and borders.	<a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Plant</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>
Gladiolus <i>Gladiolus spp.</i> Perennial bulb	Many	Full sun	Tender	December-February	Three months after planting	3-4 feet tall. Blooms in late winter and spring depending on kind and time of planting. Sword-shaped leaves and flaring or ruffled tubular flowers on tall, usually one-sided spikes. Not good in summer heat. Store corms after flowering at 40-50°F. Thrips are a pest.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Plants</a>
Hollyhock <i>Alcea rosea</i> Annual	Red, yellow, white, pink, salmon, purple, lavender, orange	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	August-October	May	2-9 feet tall. Flowers 4-5 inches across. Flowers can be single, semi-double, or fully double. Heavily damaged by root-knot nematodes. Subject to spider mites. The Vietnamese hollyhocks are very reliable and often act like perennials.	<a href="#">Flowers1</a> <a href="#">Flowers2</a> <a href="#">Leaf</a>
Impatiens <i>Impatiens wallerana</i> Annual	Red, white, pink, salmon, purple, lavender, orange	Partial to full shade	Tender	September–February	May	0.5-2 feet tall. Excellent for shaded locations. Requires ample moisture. Easily damaged by full sun even in winter. May survive, but with declining vigor, for more than one year. Downy mildew can cause widespread damage. Sunpatiens and New Guinea impatiens are good alternatives to this plant.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Flowers1</a> <a href="#">Flowers2</a>
Kalanchoe <i>Kalanchoe blossfeldiana</i> Annual	Orange, pink, red, yellow, salmon	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	September–December	When desired or after first frost	1-1.5 feet tall. Winter and spring bloom. Slow, upright growth. Scallop-edged leaves. Tolerant of dry soil. Excellent plant for containers. Ideal for groundcover, rock gardens, raised planters, or containers.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Plants</a>
Lisianthus <i>Eustoma grandiflorum</i> Biennial	Purple, white, pink, lavender, bi-colors	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	February-April; October-November	When desired	1-2 feet tall. Excellent cut flowers. Well-drained, high pH soil. Excellent container plant. Attractant for butterflies, bees, and birds. Anthracnose susceptible.	<a href="#">Pot</a>
Lobelia <i>Lobelia erinus</i> Annual	Red, white, blue, pink, purple, lilac	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	October-February	June	0.6-1 feet tall. Long trailing stems. Does not withstand heat well. Stops flowering when temperatures are too warm. Very heavily damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Plants</a> <a href="#">Leaves &amp; Flowers</a>

**Table 3. Cool Season Blooming Plants for South Florida**

Name/Longevity	Flower Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos
Marguerite Daisy <i>Argyranthemum frutescens</i> Short-lived perennial	Pink, fuchsia, purple	Full sun	Hardy	October-February	April	2-3 feet tall. Abundant daisy-like flowers. Coarsely divided leaves. Avoid purchasing large, vigorous, large leaf plants as they will bloom sparsely. Keep soil moist. Thrips, leaf miner and root-knot nematodes are potential problems.	<a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Leaves &amp; Flowers</a>
Nasturtium <i>Tropaeolum majus</i>	Pink, white, red, orange, yellow, mahogany, some bi-colored	Full sun	Hardy	November-February	June	1-2 feet tall. Plants bloom for 2-3 months. Flowering ceases when subjected to prolonged heat. Starts easily from seeds sown in the garden. Tolerates poor, sandy soils. The flowers are used in salads as they are edible.	<a href="#">Plants</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>
New Guinea Impatiens <i>Impatiens x New Guinea Hybrids</i> Annual	Pink, white, red, lavender, orange, purple	Partial shade	Tender	October-December; February-April	When desired	1-2 feet tall. Distinguished from common impatiens by brilliantly marked foliage and ability to tolerate greater amount of sun when well established. Protect from hot full-afternoon sun. Resistant to downy mildew disease.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Flowers1</a> <a href="#">Flowers2</a>
Osteospermum, African Daisy <i>Osteospermum spp.</i> Annual	Many color combinations including lavender, pink, white, yellow and bi-color.	Full sun or partial shade	Hardy	October-April	When desired	1-3 feet tall, 1-2 feet wide. Annual or short-lived shrubby perennial. Will tolerate light frost. Remove dead flowers for continued flowering.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Plants</a>
Pansy <i>Viola x wittrockiana</i> Annual	Red, yellow, white, blue, pink, purple, orange, lavender, rust/bronze, black, some in combinations	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	October-January	April	0.5-1 feet tall. Blooms fall through winter. Highly cold tolerant. Will grow and flower all winter. Needs lots of moisture during hot weather. Does not tolerate heat. Heavily damaged by root-knot nematodes. Not very reliable in South Florida.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Flowers</a> <a href="#">Plants</a>
Petunia <i>Petunia x hybrida</i> Annual	Red, yellow, white, pink, salmon, purple, lavender; solid and bi-colors	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	October-February	May	0.5-1.5 feet tall. Pinch developing plants to encourage bushy growth. Well-drained soil. Lightly damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Flower</a> <a href="#">Plant</a>
Plectranthus, Quicksilver, Silver Shield <i>Plectranthus argentatus</i> Annual	Light blue to near white	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	October-February	When desired	2-3 feet tall. Upright annual. Drought tolerant. May bloom several times a year.	<a href="#">Flower1</a> <a href="#">Flower2</a> <a href="#">Leaf</a>

**Table 3. Cool Season Blooming Plants for South Florida**

Name/Longevity	Flower Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos
Snap Dragon <i>Antirrhinum majus</i> Annual	Red, yellow, white, pink, orange, salmon, lavender, purple	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	November-February	April-May	0.5-3 feet tall. Tall, intermediate or short types. Remove spent flowers to improve bloom. Tolerates temperatures to about 20°F but with reduced flowering. Stops flowering in hot weather. Heavily damaged by root-knot nematodes. Subject to crown-rot fungus.	<a href="#">Bed Flowers Plants</a>
Strawflower <i>Helichrysum bracteatum</i> Annual	Yellow, orange, red, pink, white, cream, salmon, purple	Full sun	Tender	October-February	June	1-3 feet tall. Annual or short-lived perennial with erect habit. Daisy-like flowers are papery and last indefinitely when dried. Keep on dry side once well started. Inclined to have dry leaves at base. Blooms summer to winter.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Leaves &amp; Flowers</a>
Verbena <i>Verbena x hybrid</i> Perennial	White, pink, purple, lavender, red	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	February-April October-November	When desired	0.5-1 feet tall. Short-lived perennial often treated as an annual. Drought tolerant. Could survive summer. Most varieties susceptible to mildew in damp locations with poor air circulation or excessive heat. Lightly damaged by root-knot nematodes.	<a href="#">Bed Flowers Leaves</a>
Viola <i>Viola cornuta</i> Annual	Red, yellow, white, blue, pink, purple, orange, lavender, rust/bronze, black, some in combinations	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	October-January	April	0.5-1.5 feet tall. Plants bloom over many weeks if old flowers are kept picked. Flowers are pansy-like. Highly cold resistant. Does not tolerate heat. Requires ample irrigation but soil must be well-drained. Heavily damaged by root-knot nematodes. Not very reliable in South Florida.	<a href="#">Bed Pot Flowers</a>

**Table 4. Bedding Plants Grown for their Showy Leaves or Fruits**

Name/Longevity	Leaf or Fruit Color	Exposure	Cold Tolerance	Planting Date	Typical Removal Date	Comments	Photos
Caladium <i>Caladium X hortalanum</i> Perennial	White, pink, green, red, etc., streaked, mottled, etc. leaves	Partial shade to full shade	Tender	February-May	When desired or when leaves dieback	1.5-2 feet tall. Leaf display from spring through summer. Leaf dieback thereafter. Foliage burns in full sun. Some varieties are tolerant of full sun. Tubers can be left in ground until crowded.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Leaf</a>
Coleus <i>Plectranthus scutellarioides</i> Annual	Bronze, red, yellow, green, orange, purple, salmon, brown, variegated leaves	Full sun to dappled or partial shade	Tender	March-September	When desired, usually 3-4 months after planting	1-2 feet tall herb. Serves primarily as a late spring, summer annual but can be grown year-round. Regular moisture. Foliage may fade in full sun. Pinch tips to encourage fuller plants. Easily propagated from cuttings.	<a href="#">Bed</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>
Dusty Miller <i>Senecio cineraria</i> Annual	Silvery-white leaves, covered with a very soft dense fuzz	Full sun to partial shade	Tender	October-March	August	1-1.5 feet tall Versatile border plant with good longevity. Performs well in poor, dry soils. Very tolerant of heat, salt air but does poorly in high humidity or excessive rain. Especially dramatic when viewed at night. Remove blooms to encourage leaf growth.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Plant</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>
Helichrysum, Icicles <i>Helichrysum italicum</i> Annual	Silver, gray leaves	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	November-February	When desired	1-1.5 feet tall. Annual or short-lived perennial. Prefers well-drained soil. High drought and salt tolerance. Makes excellent contrast in bedding area with cool color plants. Fragrant flowers.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Plant</a>
Ornamental Pepper <i>Capsicum annum</i> Perennial	White, green, yellow, orange, red, purple, black fruits	Full sun	Tender	March-August	November	1-2 feet tall. One of the most heat-tolerant bedding plants. Fruits from May until frost. Several colors are often seen on the plants at the same time as the fruit ripen and change color. Peppers are edible but not for most palates.	<a href="#">Pot1</a> <a href="#">Pot2</a> <a href="#">Fruits</a>
Purple Queen <i>Setcreasea pallida</i> Perennial	Purple leaves. Flowers pink and somewhat showy	Full sun to partial shade	Hardy	February-October	When desired	1-2 feet tall. Year-round color. Thick coverage if well maintained, otherwise sparse coverage. High drought tolerance but water needed for best growth and coverage. Tolerates acid to alkaline pH soils. Pest resistant. Succulent stems are easily broken. Sap may irritate the skin.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Flowers &amp; Leaves</a>
Sweet Potato <i>Ipomoea batatas</i> Perennial	Yellow-green, reddish, purple or novelty colored leaves.	Full sun to dappled shade	Tender	March-October	When frost affected or leaf diseased.	1-2 feet tall. Year-round leaf color. Trailing, fast-growing vine with white sap. Covers ground quickly. Irrigate lightly.	<a href="#">Bed1</a> <a href="#">Bed2</a> <a href="#">Pot</a> <a href="#">Leaves</a>

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## YouTubes

[Flat-topped Golden Rod](#)  
[Gaillardia](#)  
[Gladiolus](#)

## Useful Links

[Annuals for Florida, A-Z](#)  
[Florida-Friendly Landscaping](#)

## Lee County Fact Sheets

[79 Hedges and Screens](#) for South Florida Gardens and Landscapes  
[Small Trees](#) for South Florida  
[Flowering Trees](#) for South Florida Fact Sheets  
[Native Plant Fact Sheets](#) by Lee County Extension

All pictures were taken by Stephen H. Brown in South Florida unless otherwise indicated.

If you are a commercial grower and would like Lee County Extension to test your bedding plants for Southwest Florida, please contact Stephen Brown at [brownsh@ufl.edu](mailto:brownsh@ufl.edu)

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