

## FREDERICK COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS RESUME PLANT SALE

By Landscape Gardening Committee, Frederick County Master Gardeners

It's not too early to plan for your spring and summer flowers, so start gathering your gardening tools—your pots, shovels, and gardening gloves—and join us at the upcoming Frederick Master Gardeners' Plant Sale on Saturday, April 23, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Frederick Fairgrounds, along with the *Frederick News-Post* Fiberfest. Master Gardeners will be showcasing more than 40 varieties of annuals, both old favorites and new varieties, as well as perennials, vegetables, and herbs, all well suited to Frederick growing conditions.

An important component in any garden, from small balconies to large flower beds, annuals provide colorful blooms and interesting foliage for that long stretch from spring through the first frost. If chosen wisely, they can thrive in a number of light and soil conditions, resist rabbit and deer, and provide nutrients for butterflies, bees, and other pollinators.

Here are just a few of the annuals featured at the plant sale that will be splendid in a summer garden:

**Have a sunny spot?** If you have six hours or more of summer sun per day, take advantage of the magnificent new colors that add spark to old favorites, including geraniums (*Pelargonium species*), lantana (*Lantana camara*), and marigolds (*Tagetes erecta*). Consider adding height to a prominent garden spot with thunbergia (*Thunbergia atlata*), a sun-loving vine with profuse yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers.

**Need color in a shady area?** Often challenging, areas with low or partial light can be successfully planted with the right annual. An important addition to this year's sale, the Beacon series of impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*) is resistant to downy mildew, a condition that has bedeviled impatiens in the past. Other plants that thrive in partial shade, with at least four hours of sun per day, include torenia (*Torenia fournieri*), begonias (*Begoniaceae sp.*), calibrachoa (*Calibrachoa parviflora*), and lobelias (*Lobelia erinus*).

**Interested in long-lasting blooms and magnificent color?** Some annuals are especially noteworthy for their long blooming period from spring through fall. Consider penta (*Pentas lanceolata*), verbena (*Verbena officinalis*), portulaca (*Portulaca oleracea*), and salvia (*Salvia officinalis*) for a profusion of color throughout the seasons.

**Want to add interesting foliage and textures?** Foliage plants add a perfect note to flowering annuals. They are dramatic by themselves or interplanted with other annuals, offsetting the flowers as the perfect foil. Try the bushy, colorful foliage of Alternanthera (*Alternanthera sp.*), the big, heart-shaped leaves of caladium (*Caladium sp.*), or the brilliant contrasting colors of coleus (*Coleus sp.*).

**Deer and rabbits nibbling your plants?** Fortunately, some annuals are unattractive to hungry wildlife, including ageratum (*Ageratum houstonianum*), alyssum (*Lobularia spp.*), begonias, and geraniums, to name a few.

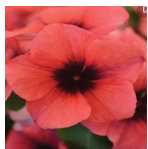
**Worried about drought?** While all annuals require water, some are more tolerant of dry spells. Try scaevola (*Scaevola sp.*), the Fairy Fan flower. Long blooming, with a delightful draping habit, it's attractive in containers with companion plants or on its own. Other drought-tolerant plants are Bidens (*Bidens pilosa*), lantana, and portulaca.

**Want to attract pollinators?** Annuals that are great pollen- and nectar-rich sources of nutrients include alyssum, angelonia, bacopa (*Bacopa spp.*), begonias, celosia (*Celosia spp.*), gazania (*Gazania spp.*), marigolds, and verbena. Plant them and your garden will become alive with the bustle of the pollinators.

**Interested in container gardening?** Think in terms of three levels: spikes, fillers, and drapes. We have many offerings for creating dazzling combinations. One striking example for a sunny spot is a mix of spikey dracaena, colorful snapdragon-like angelonia, and draping portulaca with profuse, rose-like flowers.

**Looking for new varieties of old favorites?** Newcomers that will add dazzle to the garden include the unusual Tattoo series of vinca (don't confuse this annual, *Catharanthus roseus*, with the periwinkle vinca vine), the magnificent Flame celosia, the Colorblast Mango Mojito portulaca, and the Pinkerbelle double wave petunia.

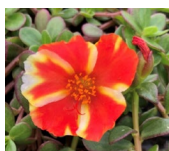
Photographs and additional information on each of these plants can be found on the Master Gardeners of Frederick Facebook page (see below). As always, Master Gardeners will be available to help you identify good choices for your particular garden needs.



The Tattoo Papaya Vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*), a pretty, trailing groundcover, blooms profusely into the fall.



First Flame Celosia (*Celosia plumosa*) adds a dramatic touch to any garden and pairs nicely with lime green foliage plants.



The Mango Mojito Portulaca (*Portulaca oleracea*), a playful mix of oranges and yellows, planted with yellow Celosia, will provide a dramatic note to a sun garden.



The Raspberry Swirl Petunia (*Petunia x hybrida sp.*) offers a colorful array of petals to blend with other white or blue blooms.

As this column is written, Frederick County Master Gardener seminars and other activities—except those held outdoors or at locations other than the Extension Office—were still cancelled; however, the building was scheduled to open to the public in early April. Please call (see below) to check our availability. In the meantime, you can find gardening information and advice online at: University of MD Extension Home & Garden Information Center, <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/environmentnatural-resources/program-areas/home-and-garden-information-center>; Frederick County Master Gardeners

Publications, <http://extension.umd.edu/locations/frederick-county/home-gardening>; Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/mastergardenersfrederickcountymaryland>; or call us at [301-600-1596](tel:301-600-1596).

*For more information about the Frederick County Master Gardener/Horticulture Program, visit: <http://extension.umd.edu/locations/frederick-county/home-gardening> or call Susan Trice at the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County office, 301-600-1596.*

*Find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/mastergardenersfrederickcountymaryland>*

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